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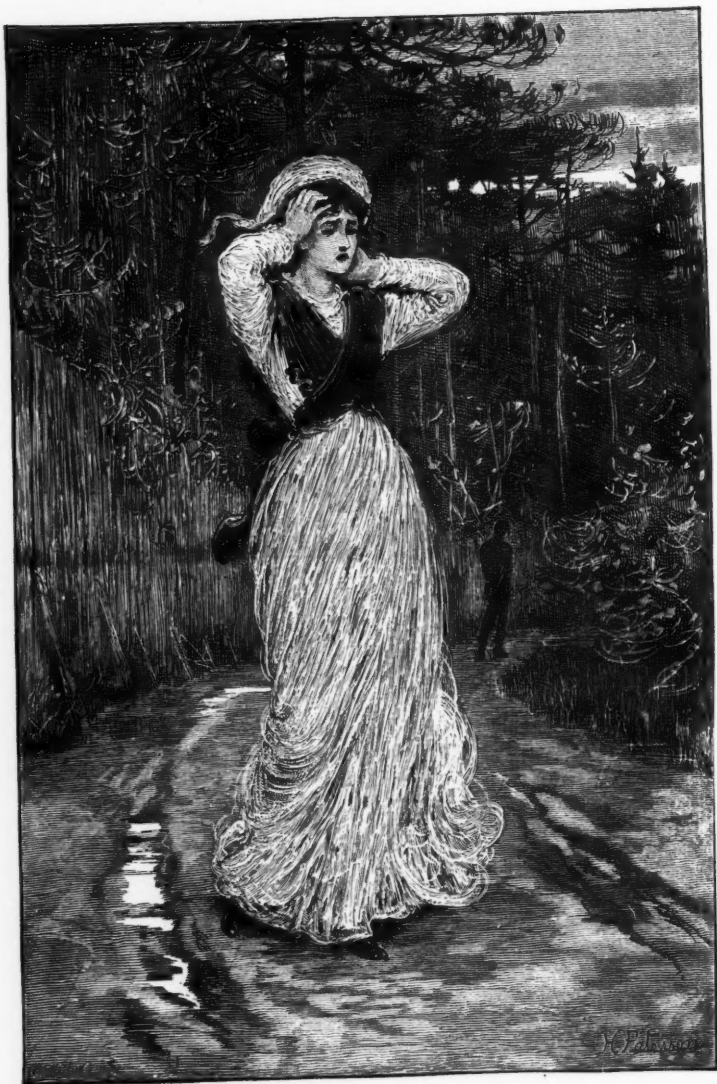
THE
CORNHILL
MAGAZINE.

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BATHSHEBA FLUNG HER HANDS TO HER FACE.

THE
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JULY, 1874.

Far from the Madding Crowd.

CHAPTER XXX.

HOT CHEEKS AND TEARFUL EYES.



ALF-AN-HOUR later Bathsheba entered her own house. There burnt upon her face when she met the light of the candles the flush and excitement which were little less than chronic with her now. The farewell words of Troy, who had accompanied her to the very door, still lingered in her ears. He had bidden her adieu for two days, which were, so he stated, to be spent at Bath in visiting some friends. He had also kissed her a second time.

It is only fair to Bathsheba to explain here a little fact which did not come to light till a long time afterwards: that Troy's presentation of himself so aptly at the roadside this evening was not by any distinctly preconcerted arrangement. He had hinted—she had forbidden; and it was only on the chance of his still coming that she had dismissed Oak, fearing a meeting between them just then.

She now sank down into a chair, wild and perturbed by all these new and fevering sequences. Then she jumped up with a manner of decision, and fetched her desk from a side table.

In three minutes, without pause or modification, she had written a letter to Boldwood, at his address beyond Casterbridge, saying mildly but firmly that she had well considered the whole subject he had brought before her and kindly given her time to decide upon; that her final decision was that she could not marry him. She had expressed to Oak an intention to wait till Boldwood came home before communicating to him her conclusive reply. But Bathsheba found that she could not wait.

It was impossible to send this letter till the next day; yet to quell her uneasiness by getting it out of her hands, and so, as it were, setting the act in motion at once, she arose to take it to any one of the women who might be in the kitchen.

She paused in the passage. A dialogue was going on in the kitchen, and Bathsheba and Troy were the subject of it.

"If he marry her, she'll gie up farming."

"'Twill be a gallant life, but may bring some trouble between the mirth—so say I."

"Well, I wish I had half such a husband."

Bathsheba had too much sense to mind seriously what her servitors said about her; but too much womanly redundancy of speech to leave alone what was said till it died the natural death of unminded things. She burst in upon them.

"Who are you speaking of?" she asked.

There was a pause before anybody replied. At last Liddy said, frankly, "What was passing was a bit of a word about yourself, miss."

"I thought so! Maryann and Liddy and Temperance—now I forbid you to suppose such things. You know I don't care the least for Mr. Troy—not I. Everybody knows how much I hate him.—Yes," repeated the froward young person, "*hate him!*"

"We know you do, miss," said Liddy, "and so do we all."

"I hate him too," said Maryann.

"Maryann—O you perjured woman! How you can speak that wicked story!" said Bathsheba, excitedly. "You admired him from your heart only this morning in the very world, you did. Yes, Maryann, you know it!"

"Yes, miss, but so did you. He is a wild scamp now, and you are right to hate him."

"He's *not* a wild scamp! How dare you to my face! I have no right to hate him, nor you, nor anybody. But I am a silly woman. What is it to me what he is? You know it is nothing. I don't care for him; I don't mean to defend his good name, not I. Mind this, if any of you say a word against him you'll be dismissed instantly."

She flung down the letter and surged back into the parlour, with a big heart and tearful eyes, Liddy following her.

"O miss!" said mild Liddy, looking pitifully into Bathsheba's face. "I am sorry we mistook you so! I did think you cared for him; but I see you don't now."

"Shut the door, Liddy."

Liddy closed the door, and went on: "People always says such foolery, miss. I'll make answer hencefor'ard, 'Of course a lady like Miss Everdene can't love him;' I'll say it out in plain black and white."

Bathsheba burst out: "O Liddy, are you such a simpleton! Can't you read riddles? Can't you see! Are you a woman yourself!"

Liddy's clear eyes rounded with wonderment.

"Yes, you must be a blind thing, Liddy!" she said, in reckless abandonment and grief. "Oh, I love him to very distraction and misery and agony. Don't be frightened at me, though perhaps I am enough to frighten any innocent woman. Come closer—closer." She put her arms round Liddy's neck. "I must let it out to somebody; it is wearing me away. Don't you yet know enough of me to see through that miserable denial of mine? O God, what a lie it was! Heaven and my Love forgive me. And don't you know that a woman who loves at all thinks nothing of perjury when it is balanced against her love? There, go out of the room; I want to be quite alone."

Liddy went towards the door.

"Liddy, come here. Solemnly swear to me that he's not a bad man; that it is all lies they say about him!"

"But, miss, how can I say he is not if ——"

"You graceless girl. How can you have the cruel heart to repeat what they say? Unfeeling thing that you are. . . . But I'll see if you or anybody else in the village, or town either, dare do such a thing!" She started off, pacing from fire-place to door, and back again.

"No, miss. I don't—I know it is not true," said Liddy, frightened at Bathsheba's unwonted vehemence.

"I suppose you only agree with me like that to please me. But, Liddy, he *cannot* be bad, as is said. Do you hear?"

"Yes, miss, yes."

"And you don't believe he is?"

"I don't know what to say, miss," said Liddy, beginning to cry. "If I say No, you don't believe me; and if I say Yes, you rage at me."

"Say you don't believe it—say you don't!"

"I don't believe him to be so bad as they make out."

"He is not bad at all. . . . My poor life and heart, how weak I am!" she moaned, in a relaxed, desultory way, heedless of Liddy's presence. "Oh, how I wish I had never seen him! Loving is misery for women always. I shall never forgive my Maker for making me a woman, and dearly am I beginning to pay for the honour of owning a pretty face." She freshened and turned to Liddy suddenly. "Mind this, Lydia Smallbury, if you repeat anywhere a single word of what I have said to

you inside this closed door, I'll never trust you, or love you, or have you with me a moment longer—not a moment."

"I don't want to repeat anything," said Liddy with womanly dignity of a diminutive order; "but I don't wish to stay with you. And, if you please, I'll go at the end of the harvest, or this week, or to-day . . . I don't see that I deserve to be put upon and stormed at for nothing!" concluded the small woman, bigly.

"No, no, Liddy; you must stay!" said Bathsheba, dropping from haughtiness to entreaty with capricious inconsequence. "You must not notice my being in a taking just now. You are not as a servant—you are a companion to me. Dear, dear—I don't know what I am doing since this miserable ache o'my heart has weighted and worn upon me so. What shall I come to! I suppose I shall die quite young. Yes, I know I shall. I wonder sometimes if I am doomed to die in the Union. I am friendless enough, God knows."

"I won't notice anything, nor will I leave you!" sobbed Liddy, impulsively putting up her lips to Bathsheba's, and kissing her.

Then Bathsheba kissed Liddy, and all was smooth again.

"I don't often cry, do I, Lidd? but you have made tears come into my eyes," she said, a smile shining through the moisture. "Try to think him a good man, won't you, dear Liddy?"

"I will, miss, indeed."

"He is a sort of steady man in a wild way, you know. That's better than to be as some are, wild in a steady way. I am afraid that's how I am. And promise me to keep my secret—do, Liddy! And do not let them know that I have been crying about him, because it will be dreadful for me, and no good to him, poor thing!"

"Death's head himself shan't wring it from me, mistress, if I've a mind to keep anything, and I'll always be your friend," replied Liddy, emphatically, at the same time bringing a few more tears into her own eyes, not from any particular necessity, but from an artistic sense of making herself in keeping with the remainder of the picture, which seems to influence women at such times. "I think God likes us to be good friends, don't you?"

"Indeed I do."

"And, dear miss, you won't harry me and storm at me, will you? because you seem to swell so tall as a lion then, and it frightens me. Do you know, I fancy you would be a match for any man when you are in one o' your takings."

"Never! do you?" said Bathsheba, slightly laughing, though somewhat seriously alarmed by this Amazonian picture of herself. "I hope I am not a bold sort of maid—mannish?" she continued, with some anxiety.

"Oh no, not mannish; but so almighty womanish that 'tis getting on that way sometimes. Ah! miss," she said, after having drawn her breath very sadly in and sent it very sadly out, "I wish I had half your failing that way. 'Tis a great protection to a poor maid in these days!"

CHAPTER XXXI.

BLAME: FURY.

THE next evening Bathsheba, with the idea of getting out of the way of Mr. Boldwood in the event of his returning to answer her note in person, proceeded to fulfil an engagement made with Liddy some few hours earlier. Bathsheba's companion, as a gage of their reconciliation, had been granted a week's holiday to visit her sister, who was married to a thriving hurdler and cattle crib-maker living in a delightful labyrinth of hazel copse not far from Yalbury. The arrangement was that Miss Everdene should honour them by coming there for a day or two to inspect some ingenious contrivances which this man of the woods had introduced into his wares.

Leaving her instructions with Gabriel and Maryann that they were to see everything carefully locked up for the night, she went out of the house just at the close of a timely thunder-shower, which had refined the air, and daintily bathed the mere coat of the land, all beneath being dry as ever. Freshness was exhaled in an essence from the varied contours of bank and hollow, as if the earth breathed maiden breath, and the pleased birds were hymning to the scene. Before her among the clouds there was a contrast in the shape of lairs of fierce light which showed themselves in the neighbourhood of a hidden sun, lingering on to the farthest north-west corner of the heavens that this midsummer season allowed.

She had walked nearly three miles of her journey, watching how the day was retreating, and thinking how the time of deeds was quietly melting into the time of thought, to give place in its turn to the time of prayer and sleep, when she beheld advancing over the hill the very man she sought so anxiously to elude. Boldwood was stepping on, not with that quiet tread of reserved strength which was his customary gait, in which he always seemed to be balancing two thoughts. His manner was stunned and sluggish now.

Boldwood had for the first time been awakened to woman's privileges in the practice of tergiversation without regard to another's distraction and possible blight. That Bathsheba was a firm and positive girl, far less inconsequent than her fellows, had been the very lung of his hope; for he had held that these qualities would lead her to adhere to a straight course for consistency's sake, and accept him, though her fancy might not flood him with the iridescent hues of uncritical love. But the argument now came back as sorry gleams from a broken mirror. The discovery was no less a scourge than a surprise.

He came on looking upon the ground, and did not see Bathsheba till they were less than a stone's throw apart. He looked up at the sound of her pit-pat, and his changed appearance sufficiently denoted to her the depth and strength of the feelings paralysed by her letter.

"Oh; is it you, Mr. Boldwood," she faltered, a guilty warmth pulsing in her face.

Those who have the power of reproaching in silence may find it a means more effective than words. There are accents in the eye which are not on the tongue, and more tales come from pale lips than can enter an ear. It is both the grandeur and the pain of the remoter moods that they avoid the pathway of sound. Boldwood's look was unanswerable.

Seeing she turned a little aside, he said, "What, are you afraid of me?"

"Why should you say that?" said Bathsheba.

"I fancied you looked so," said he. "And it is most strange, because of its contrast with my feeling for you."

She regained self-possession, fixed her eyes calmly, and waited.

"You know what that feeling is," continued Boldwood deliberately.

"A thing strong as death. No dismissal by a hasty letter affects that."

"I wish you did not feel so strongly about me," she murmured. "It is generous of you, and more than I deserve, but I must not hear it now."

"Hear it? What do you think I have to say, then? I am not to marry you, and that's enough. Your letter was excellently plain. I want you to hear nothing—not I."

Bathsheba was unable to direct her will into any definite groove for freeing herself from this fearfully awkward position. She confusedly said, "Good evening," and was moving on. Boldwood walked up to her heavily and dully.

"Bathsheba—darling—is it final indeed?"

"Indeed it is."

"O, Bathsheba—have pity upon me!" Boldwood burst out. "God's sake, yes—I am come to that low, lowest stage—to ask a woman for pity! Still, she is you—she is you."

Bathsheba commanded herself well. But she could hardly get a clear voice for what came instinctively to her lips: "There is little honour to the woman in that speech." It was only whispered, for something unutterably mournful no less than distressing in this spectacle of a man showing himself to be so entirely the vane of a passion enervated the feminine instinct for punctilios.

"I am beyond myself about this, and am mad," he said. "I am no stoic at all to be supplicating here; but I do supplicate to you. I wish you knew what is in me of devotion to you; but it is impossible, that. In bare human mercy to a lonely man don't throw me off now!"

"I don't throw you off—indeed, how can I? I never had you." In her noon-clear sense that she had never loved him she forgot for a moment her thoughtless angle on that day in February.

"But there was a time when you turned to me, before I thought of you. I don't reproach you, for even now I feel that the ignorant and cold darkness that I should have lived in if you had not attracted me by that letter—valentine you call it—would have been worse than my know-

ledge of you, though it has brought this misery. But, I say, there was a time when I knew nothing of you, and cared nothing for you, and yet you drew me on. And if you say you gave me no encouragement I cannot but contradict you."

"What you call encouragement was the childish game of an idle minute. I have bitterly repented of it—ay, bitterly, and in tears. Can you still go on reminding me?"

"I don't accuse you of it—I deplore it. I took for earnest what you insist was jest, and now this that I pray to be jest you say is awful wretched earnest. Our moods meet at wrong places. I wish your feeling was more like mine, or my feeling more like yours! O could I but have foreseen the torture that trifling trick was going to lead me into, how I should have cursed you; but only having been able to see it since, I cannot do that, for I love you too well! But it is weak, idle drivelling to go on like this. . . . Bathsheba, you are the first woman of any shade or nature that I have ever looked at to love, and it is the having been so near claiming you for my own that makes this denial so hard to bear. How nearly you promised me! But I don't speak now to move your heart, and make you grieve because of my pain; it is no use, that. I must bear it; my pain would get no less by paining you."

"But I do pity you—deeply—oh so deeply!" she earnestly said.

"Do no such thing—do no such thing. Your dear love, Bathsheba, is such a vast thing beside your pity that the loss of your pity as well as your love is no great addition to my sorrow, nor does the gain of your pity make it sensibly less. Oh sweet—how dearly you spoke to me behind the spear-bed at the washing-pool, and in the barn at the shearing, and that dearest last time in the evening at your home! Where are your pleasant words all gone—your earnest hope to be able to love me? Where is your firm conviction that you would get to care for me very much? Really forgotten?—really?"

She checked emotion, looked him quietly and clearly in the face, and said in her low firm voice, "Mr. Boldwood, I promised you nothing. Would you have had me a woman of clay when you paid me that furthest, highest compliment a man can pay a woman—telling her he loves her? I was bound to show some feeling, if I would not be a graceless shrew. Yet each of those pleasures was just for the day—the day just for the pleasure. How was I to know that what is a pastime to all other men was death to you? Have reason, do, and think more kindly of me!"

"Well, never mind arguing—never mind. One thing is sure: you were all but mine, and now you are not nearly mine. Everything is changed, and that by you alone, remember. You were nothing to me once, and I was contented; you are now nothing to me again, and how different the second nothing is from the first! Would to God you had never taken me up, since it was only to throw me down!"

Bathsheba, in spite of her mettle, began to feel unmistakable signs that she was inherently the weaker vessel. She strove miserably against

this femininity which would insist upon supplying unbidden emotions in stronger and stronger current. She had tried to elude agitation by fixing her mind on the trees, sky, any trivial object before her eyes, whilst his reproaches fell, but ingenuity could not save her now.

"I did not take you up—surely I did not!" she answered as heroically as she could. "But don't be in this mood with me. I can endure being told I am in the wrong, if you will only tell it me gently! Oh sir, will you not kindly forgive me, and look at it cheerfully?"

"Cheerfully! Can a man fooled to utter heartburning find a reason for being merry? If I have lost, how can I be as if I had won? Heavens, you must be heartless quite! Had I known what a fearfully bitter sweet this was to be, how I would have avoided you, and never seen you, and been deaf to you. I tell you all this, but what do you care! You don't care."

She returned silent and weak denials to his charges, and swayed her head desperately, as if to thrust away the words as they came showering about her ears from the lips of the trembling man in the climax of life, with his bronzed Roman face and fine frame.

"Dearest, dearest, I am wavering even now between the two opposites of recklessly renouncing you, and labouring humbly for you again. Forget that you have said No, and let it be as it was. Say, Bathsheba, that you only wrote that refusal to me in fun—come, say it to me!"

"It would be untrue, and painful to both of us. You overrate my capacity for love. I don't possess half the warmth of nature you believe me to have. An unprotected childhood in a cold world has beaten gentleness out of me."

He immediately said with more resentment: "That may be true, somewhat; but ah, Miss Everdene, it won't do as a reason! You are not the cold woman you would have me believe. No, no. It isn't because you have no feeling in you that you don't love me. You naturally would have me think so—you would hide from me that you have a burning heart like mine. You have love enough, but it is turned into a new channel. I know where."

The swift music of her heart became hubbub now, and she throbbed to extremity. He was coming to Troy. He did then know what had transpired! And the name fell from his lips the next moment.

"Why did Troy not leave my treasure alone?" he asked, fiercely. "When I had no thought of injuring him why did he force himself upon your notice! Before he worried you your inclination was to have me; when next I should have come to you your answer would have been Yes. Can you deny it—I ask, can you deny it?"

She delayed the reply, but was too honest to withhold it. "I cannot," she whispered.

"I know you cannot. But he stole in in my absence and robbed me. Why didn't he win you away before, when nobody would have been grieved?—when nobody would have been set tale-bearing. Now the

people sneer at me—the very hills and sky seem to laugh at me till I blush shamefully for my folly. I have lost my respect, my good name, my standing—lost it, never to get it again. Go and marry your man—go on!”

“Oh sir—Mr. Boldwood!”

“You may as well. I have no further claim upon you. As for me, I had better go somewhere alone, and hide,—and pray. I loved a woman once. I am now ashamed. When I am dead they’ll say, miserable love-sick man that he was. Heaven—heaven—if I had got jilted secretly, and the dishonour not known, and my position kept! But no matter, it is gone, and the woman not gained. Shame upon him—shame!”

His unreasonable anger terrified her, and she glided from him, without obviously moving, as she said, “I am only a girl—do not speak to me so!”

“All the time you knew—how very well you knew—that your new freak was my misery. Dazzled by brass and scarlet—oh Bathsheba—this is woman’s folly indeed!”

She fired up at once. “You are taking too much upon yourself!” she said, vehemently. “Everybody is upon me—everybody. It is unmanly to attack a woman so! I have nobody in the world to fight my battles for me, but no mercy is shown. Yet if a thousand of you sneer and say things against me, I *will not* be put down!”

“You’ll chatter with him doubtless about me. Say to him, ‘Boldwood would have died for me.’ Yes, and you have given way to him knowing him to be not the man for you. He has kissed you—claimed you as his. Do you hear, he has kissed you. Deny it!”

The most tragic woman is cowed by a tragic man, and although Boldwood was, in vehemence and glow, nearly her own self rendered into another sex, Bathsheba’s cheek quivered. She gasped, “Leave me sir—leave me! I am nothing to you. Let me go on!”

“Deny that he has kissed you.”

“I shall not.”

“Ha—then he has!” came hoarsely from the farmer.

“He has,” she said, slowly, and in spite of her fear, defiantly. “I am not ashamed to speak the truth.”

“Then curse him; and curse him!” said Boldwood, breaking into a whispered fury. “Whilst I would have given worlds to touch your hand you have let a rake come in without right or ceremony and—kiss you! Heaven’s mercy—kiss you! . . . Ah, a time of his life shall come when he will have to repent—and think wretchedly of the pain he has caused another man; and then may he ache, and wish, and curse, and yearn—as I do now!”

“Don’t, don’t, oh don’t pray down evil upon him!” she implored in a miserable cry. “Anything but that—anything. Oh be kind to him, sir, for I love him dearly!”

Boldwood’s ideas had reached that point of fusion at which outline

and consistency entirely disappear. The impending night appeared to concentrate in his eye. He did not hear her at all now.

"I'll punish him—by my soul that will I! I'll meet him, soldier or no, and I'll horsewhip the untimely stripling for this reckless theft of my one delight. If he were a hundred men I'd horsewhip him . . ." He dropped his voice suddenly and unnaturally. "Bathsheba, sweet lost coquette, pardon me. I've been blaming you, threatening you, behaving like a churl to you, when he's the greatest sinner. He stole your dear heart away with his unfathomable lies! . . . It is a fortunate thing for him that he's gone back to his regiment—that he's in Melchester, and not here! I hope he may not return here just yet. I pray God he may not come into my sight, for I may be tempted beyond myself. Oh Bathsheba, keep him away—yes keep him away from me!"

For a moment Boldwood stood so inertly after this that his soul seemed to have been entirely exhaled with the breath of his passionate words. He turned his face away, and withdrew, and his form was soon covered over by the twilight as his footsteps mixed in with the low hiss of the leafy trees.

Bathsheba, who had been standing motionless as a model all this latter time, flung her hands to her face, and wildly attempted to ponder on the exhibition which had just passed away. Such astounding wells of fevered feeling in a still man like Mr. Boldwood were incomprehensible, dreadful. Instead of being a man trained to repression he was—what she had seen him.

The force of the farmer's threats lay in their relation to a circumstance known at present only to herself; her lover was coming back to Weatherbury the very next day. Troy had not returned to Melchester Barracks as Boldwood and others supposed, but had merely gone for a day or two to visit some acquaintance in Bath, and had yet a week or more remaining to his furlough.

She felt wretchedly certain that if he revisited her just at this nick of time, and came into contact with Boldwood, a fierce quarrel would be the consequence. She panted with solicitude when she thought of possible injury to Troy. The least spark would kindle the farmer's swift feelings of rage and jealousy; he would lose his self-mastery as he had this evening; Troy's blitheness might become aggressive; it might take the direction of derision, and Boldwood's anger might then take the direction of revenge.

With almost a morbid dread of being thought a gushing girl, this guideless woman too well concealed from the world under a manner of carelessness the warm depths of her strong emotions. But now there was no reserve. In her distraction, instead of advancing further, she walked up and down, beating the air with her fingers, pressing her brow, and sobbing brokenly to herself. Then she sat down on a heap of stones by the wayside to think. There she remained long. The dark rotundity of the earth approached the foreshores and promontories of

coppery cloud which bounded a green and pellucid expanse in the western sky, amaranthine glosses came over them then, and the unresting world wheeled her round to a contrasting prospect eastward, in the hape of indecisive and palpitating stars. She gazed upon their silent throes amid the shades of space, but realised none at all. Her troubled spirit was far away with Troy.

CHAPTER XXXII.

NIGHT: HORSES TRAMPING.

THE village of Weatherbury was quiet as the graveyard in its midst, and the living were lying well-nigh as still as the dead. The church clock struck eleven. The air was so empty of other sounds that the whirr of the clockwork immediately before the strokes was distinct, and so was also the click of the same at their close. The notes flew forth with the usual blind obtuseness of inanimate things—flapping and rebounding among walls, undulating against the scattered clouds, spreading through their interstices into unexplored miles of space.

Bathsheba's crannied and mouldy halls were to-night occupied only by Maryann, Liddy being, as was stated, with her sister, whom Bathsheba had set out to visit. A few minutes after eleven had struck, Maryann turned in her bed with a sense of being disturbed. She was totally unconscious of the nature of the interruption to her sleep. It led to a dream, and the dream to an awakening, with an uneasy sensation that something had happened. She left her bed and looked out of the window. The paddock abutted on this end of the building, and in the paddock she could just discern by the uncertain gray a moving figure approaching the horse that was feeding there. The figure seized the horse by the forelock, and led it to the corner of the field. Here she could see some object which circumstances proved to be a vehicle, for after a few minutes' spent apparently in harnessing, she heard the trot of the horse down the road, mingled with the sound of light wheels.

Two varieties only of humanity could have entered the paddock with the ghost-like glide of that mysterious figure. They were a woman and a gipsy man. A woman was out of the question in such an occupation at this hour, and the comer could be no less than a thief, who might probably have known the weakness of the household on this particular night, and have chosen it on that account for his daring attempt. Moreover, to raise suspicion to conviction itself, there were gipsies in Weatherbury Bottom.

Maryann, who had been afraid to shout in the robber's presence, having seen him depart, had no fear. She hastily slipped on her clothes, stumped down the disjointed staircase with its hundred creaks, ran to Coggan's, the nearest house, and raised an alarm. Coggan called Gabriel,

who now again lodged in his house as at first, and together they went to the paddock. Beyond all doubt the horse was gone.

"Listen!" said Gabriel.

They listened. Distinct upon the stagnant air came the sounds of a trotting horse passing over Weatherbury Hill—just beyond the gipsies' encampment in Weatherbury Bottom.

"That's our Dainty—I'll swear to her step," said Jan.

"Mighty me! Won't mis'ess storm and call us stupids when she comes back!" moaned Maryann. "How I wish it had happened when she was at home, and none of us had been answerable!"

"We must ride after," said Gabriel, decisively. "I'll be responsible to Miss Everdene for what we do. Yes, we'll follow."

"Faith, I don't see how," said Coggan. "All our horses are too heavy for that trick except little Poppet, and what's she between two of us?—If we only had that pair over the hedge we might do something."

"Which pair?"

"Mr. Boldwood's Tidy and Moll."

"Then wait here till I come hither again," said Gabriel. He ran down the hill towards Farmer Boldwood's.

"Farmer Boldwood is not at home," said Maryann.

"All the better," said Coggan. "I know what he's gone for."

Less than five minutes brought up Oak again, running at the same pace, with two halters dangling from his hand.

"Where did you find 'em?" said Coggan, turning round and leaping upon the hedge without waiting for an answer.

"Under the eaves. I knew where they were kept," said Gabriel, following him. "Coggan, you can ride bare-backed? there's no time to look for saddles."

"Like a hero!" said Jan.

"Maryann, you go to bed," Gabriel shouted to her from the top of the hedge.

Springing down into Boldwood's pastures, each pocketed his halter to hide it from the horses, who, seeing the men empty-handed, docilely allowed themselves to be seized by the mane, when the halters were dexterously slipped on. Having neither bit nor bridle, Oak and Coggan extemporised the former by passing the rope in each case through the animal's mouth and looping it on the other side. Oak vaulted astride, and Coggan clambered up by aid of the bank, when they ascended to the gate and galloped off in the direction taken by Bathsheba's horse and the robber. Whose vehicle the horse had been harnessed to was a matter of some uncertainty.

Weatherbury Bottom was reached in three or four minutes. They scanned the shady green patch by the roadside. The gipsies were gone.

"The villains!" said Gabriel. "Which way have they gone, I wonder?"

"Straight on, as sure as God made little apples," said Jan.

"Very well; we are better mounted, and must overtake 'em," said Oak. "Now, on at full speed!"

No sound of the rider in their van could now be discovered. The road-metal grew softer and more clayey as Weatherbury was left behind, and the late rain had wetted its surface to a somewhat plastic, but not muddy state. They came to cross-roads. Coggan suddenly pulled up Moll and slipped off.

"What's the matter?" said Gabriel.

"We must try to track 'em, since we can't hear 'em," said Jan, fumbling in his pockets. He struck a light, and held the match to the ground. The rain had been heavier here, and all foot and horse tracks made previous to the storm had been abraded and blurred by the drops, and they were now so many little scoops of water, which reflected the flame of the match like eyes. One set of tracks was fresh and had no water in them; one pair of ruts was also empty, and not small canals, like the others. The footprints forming this recent impression were full of information as to pace; they were in equidistant pairs, three or four feet apart, the right and left foot of each pair being exactly opposite one another.

"Straight on!" Jan exclaimed. "Tracks like that mean a stiff gallop. No wonder we don't hear him. And the horse is harnessed—look at the ruts. Ay, that's our mare sure enough!"

"How do you know?"

"Old Jimmy Harris only shod her last week, and I'd swear to his make among ten thousand."

"The rest of the gipsies must have gone on earlier, or some other way," said Oak. "You saw there were no other tracks?"

"Trew." They rode along silently for a long weary time. Coggan's watch struck one. He lighted another match, and examined the ground again.

"'Tis a canter now," he said, "throwing away the light. A twisty rickety pace for a gig. The fact is, they overdrove her at starting; we shall catch them yet."

Again they hastened on. Coggan's watch struck two. When they looked again the hoof-marks were so spaced as to form a sort of zigzag if united, like the lamps along a street.

"That's a trot, I know," said Gabriel.

"Only a trot now," said Coggan cheerfully. "We shall overtake him in time."

They pushed rapidly on for yet two or three miles. "Ah! a moment," said Jan. "Let's see how she was driven up this hill. 'Twill help us." A light was promptly struck upon his gaiters as before, and the examination made.

"Hurrah!" said Coggan. "She walked up here—and well she might. We shall get them in two miles, for a crown."

They rode three, and listened. No sound was to be heard save a

mill-pond trickling hoarsely through a hatch, and suggesting gloomy possibilities of drowning by jumping in. Gabriel dismounted when they came to a turning. The tracks were absolutely the only guide as to the direction that they now had, and great caution was necessary to avoid confusing them with some others which had made their appearance lately.

"What does this mean?—though I guess," said Gabriel, looking up at Coggan as he moved the match over the ground about the turning. Coggan, who, no less than the panting horses, had latterly shown signs of weariness, again scrutinized the mystic characters. This time only three were of the regular horseshoe shape. Every fourth was a dot.

He screwed up his face, and emitted a long "whew-w-w!"

"Lame," said Oak.

"Yes. Dainty is lamed; the near-foot-afore," said Coggan slowly, staring still at the footprints.

"We'll push on," said Gabriel, remounting his humid steed.

Although the road along its greater part had been as good as any turnpike-road in the country it was nominally only a byway. The last turning had brought them into the high road leading to Bath. Coggan recollected himself.

"We shall have him now!" he exclaimed.

"Where?"

"Pettiton Turnpike. The keeper of that gate is the sleepest man between here and London—Dan Randall, that's his name—known en for years, when he was at Casterbridge gate. Between the lameness and the gate 'tis a done job."

They now advanced with extreme caution. Nothing was said until, against a shady background of foliage, five white bars were visible, crossing their route a little way ahead.

"Hush—we are almost close!" said Gabriel.

"Amble on upon the grass," said Coggan.

The white bars were blotted out in the midst by a dark shape in front of them. The silence of this lonely time was pierced by an exclamation from that quarter.

"Hoy-a-hoy! Gate!"

It appeared that there had been a previous call which they had not noticed, for on their close approach the door of the turnpike-house opened, and the keeper came out half-dressed, with a candle in his hand. The rays illumined the whole group.

"Keep the gate close!" shouted Gabriel. "He has stolen the horse!"

"Who?" said the turnpike-man.

Gabriel looked at the driver of the gig, and saw a woman—Bathsheba, his mistress.

On hearing his voice she had turned her face away from the light. Coggan had, however, caught sight of her in the meanwhile.

"Why, 'tis mistress—I'll take my oath!" he said, amazed.

Bathsheba it certainly was, and she had by this time done the trick she could do so well in crises not of love, namely, mask a surprise by coolness of manner.

"Well, Gabriel," she enquired quietly, "where are you going?"

"We thought——" began Gabriel.

"I am driving to Bath," she said, taking for her own use the assurance that Gabriel lacked. "An important matter made it necessary for me to give up my visit to Liddy, and go off at once. What, then, were you following me?"

"We thought the horse was stole."

"Well—what a thing! How very foolish of you not to know that I had taken the trap and horse. I could neither wake Maryann nor get into the house, though I hammered for ten minutes against her window-sill. Fortunately, I could get the key of the coach-house, so I troubled no one further. Didn't you think it might be me?"

"Why should we, miss?"

"Perhaps not. Why, those are never Farmer Boldwood's horses! Goodness mercy! what have you been doing—bringing trouble upon me in this way? What! mustn't a lady move an inch from her door without being dogged like a thief?"

"But how were we to know, if you left no account of your doings," expostulated Coggan, "and ladies don't drive at these hours as a jineral rule of society."

"I did leave an account—and you would have seen it in the morning. I wrote in chalk on the coach-house doors that I had come back for the horse and gig, and driven off; that I could arouse nobody, and should return soon."

"But you'll consider, ma'am, that we couldn't see that till it got daylight."

"True," she said, and though vexed at first she had too much sense to blame them long or seriously for a devotion to her that was as valuable as it was rare. She added with a very pretty grace, "Well, I really thank you heartily for taking all this trouble; but I wish you had borrowed anybody's horses but Mr. Boldwood's."

"Dainty is lame, miss," said Coggan. "Can ye go on?"

"It was only a stone in her shoe. I dismounted and pulled it out a hundred yards back. I can manage very well, thank you. I shall be in Bath by daylight. Will you now return, please?"

She turned her head—the gateman's candle shimmering upon her quick, clear eyes as she did so—passed through the gate, and was soon wrapped in the embowering shades of mysterious summer boughs. Coggan and Gabriel put about their horses, and, fanned by the velvety air of this July night, retraced the road by which they had come.

"A strange vagary, this of hers, isn't it, Oak?" said Coggan, curiously.

"Yes," said Gabriel, shortly. "Coggan, suppose we keep this night's work as quiet as we can?"

"I am of one and the same mind."

"Very well. We shall be home by three o'clock or so, and can creep into the parish like lambs."

Bathsheba's perturbed meditations by the roadside had ultimately evolved a conclusion that there were only two remedies for the present desperate state of affairs. The first was merely to keep Troy away from Weatherbury till Boldwood's indignation had cooled; the second to listen to Oak's entreaties, and Boldwood's denunciations, and give up Troy altogether.

Alas! Could she give up this new love—induce him to renounce her by saying she did not like him—could no more speak to him, and beg him, for her good, to end his furlough in Bath, and see her and Weatherbury no more?

It was a picture full of misery, but for a while she contemplated it firmly, allowing herself, nevertheless, as girls will, to dwell upon the happy life she would have enjoyed had Troy been Boldwood, and the path of love the path of duty—inflicting upon herself gratuitous tortures by imagining him the lover of another woman after forgetting her; for she had penetrated Troy's nature so far as to estimate his tendencies pretty accurately, but unfortunately loved him no less in thinking that he might soon cease to love her—indeed considerably more.

She jumped to her feet. She would see him at once. Yes, she would implore him by word of mouth to assist her in this dilemma. A letter to keep him away could not reach him in time, even if he should be disposed to listen to it.

Was Bathsheba altogether blind to the obvious fact that the support of a lover's arms is not of a kind best calculated to assist a resolve to renounce him? Or was she sophistically sensible, with a thrill of pleasure, that by adopting this course for getting rid of him she was ensuring a meeting with him, at any rate, once more?

It was now dark, and the hour must have been nearly ten. The only way to accomplish her purpose was to give up the idea of visiting Liddy at Yalbury, return to Weatherbury Farm, put the horse into the gig, and drive at once to Bath. The scheme seemed at first impossible: the journey was a fearfully heavy one, even for a strong horse; it was most venturesome for a woman, at night, and alone.

But could she go on to Liddy's and leave things to take their course? No, no, anything but that. Bathsheba was full of a stimulating turbulence, beside which caution vainly prayed for a hearing. She turned back towards the village.

Her walk was slow, for she wished not to enter Weatherbury till the cottagers were in bed, and, particularly, till Boldwood was secure. Her plan was now to drive to Bath during the night, see Sergeant Troy in the morning before he set out to come to her, bid him farewell, and dismiss him: then to rest the horse thoroughly (herself to weep the while, she

thought), starting early the next morning on her return journey. By this arrangement she could trot Dainty gently all the day, reach Liddy at Yalbury in the evening, and come home to Westerbury with her whenever they chose—so nobody would know she had been to Bath at all.

This idea she proceeded to carry out, with what success we have already seen.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

IN THE SUN: A HARBINGER.

A WEEK passed, and there were no tidings of Bathsheba; nor was there any explanation of her Gilpin's rig.

Then a note came for Maryann, stating that the business which had called her mistress to Bath still detained her there; but that she hoped to return in the course of another week.

Another week passed. The oat-harvest began, and all the men were afield under a monochromatic Lammas sky, amid the trembling air and short shadows of noon. Indoors nothing was to be heard save the droning of blue-bottle flies; out-of-doors the whetting of scythes and the hiss of tressy oat-ears rubbing together as their perpendicular stalks of amber-yellow fell heavily to each swath. Every drop of moisture not in the men's bottles and flagons in the form of cider was raining as perspiration from their foreheads and cheeks. Drought was everywhere else.

They were about to withdraw for a while into the charitable shade of a tree in the fence, when Coggan saw a figure in a blue coat and brass buttons running to them across the field.

"I wonder who that is?" he said.

"I hope nothing is wrong about mistress," said Maryann, who with some other women were tying the bundles (oats being always sheafed on this farm), "but an unlucky token came to me indoors this morning. I went to unlock the door and dropped the key, and it fell upon the stone floor and broke into two pieces. Breaking a key is a dreadful bodement. I wish mis'ess was home."

"'Tis Cain Ball," said Gabriel, pausing from whetting his reaphook.

Oak was not bound by his agreement to assist in the corn-field; but the harvest-month is an anxious time for a farmer, and the corn was Bathsheba's, so he lent a hand.

"He's dressed up in his best clothes," said Matthew Moon. "He hev been away from home for a few days, since he's had that felon upon his finger; for a' said, since I can't work I'll have a hollerday."

"A good time for one—an excellent time," said Joseph Poorgrass, straightening his back; for he, like some of the others, had a way of resting a while from his labour on such hot days for reasons preternaturally small; of which Cain Ball's advent on a week-day in his Sunday clothes was one of the first magnitude. "'Twas a bad leg allowed me

to read the *Pilgrim's Progress*, and Mark Clark learnt All-Fours in a whitlow."

"Ay, and my father put his arm out of joint to have time to go courting," said Jan Coggan in an eelipsing tone, wiping his face with his shirt-sleeve and thrusting back his hat upon the nape of his neck.

By this time Cainy was nearing the group of harvesters, and was perceived to be carrying a large slice of bread and ham in one hand, from which he took mouthfuls as he ran, the other hand being wrapped in a bandage. When he came close, his mouth assumed the bell shape, and he began to cough violently.

"Now, Cainy!" said Gabriel, sternly. "How many more times must I tell you to keep from running so fast when you are eating? You'll choke yourself some day, that's what you'll do, Cain Ball."

"Hok-hok-hok!" replied Cain. "A crumb of my victuals went the wrong way—hok-hok! That's what 'tis, Mister Oak! And I've been visiting to Bath because I had a felon on my thumb; yes, and I've seen—ahok-hok!"

Directly Cain mentioned Bath, they all threw down their hooks and forks and drew round him. Unfortunately the erratic crumb did not improve his narrative powers, and a supplementary hindrance was that of a sneeze, jerking from his pocket his rather large watch, which dangled in front of the young man pendulum-wise.

"Yes," he continued, directing his thoughts to Bath and letting his eyes follow, "I've seed the world at last—yes—and I've seed our mis'ess—ahok-hok-hok!"

"Bother the boy!" said Gabriel. "Something is always going the wrong way down your throat, so that you can't tell what's necessary to be told."

"Ahok! there! Please, Mister Oak, a gnat have just flew into my stomach and brought the cough on again!"

"Yes, that's just it. Your mouth is always open, you young rascal."

"'Tis terrible bad to have a gnat fly down yer throat, pore boy!" said Matthew Moon.

"Well, at Bath you saw—" prompted Gabriel.

"I saw our mistress," continued the junior shepherd, "and a soldier, walking along. And bymeby they got closer and closer, and then they went arm-in-crook, like courting complete—hok-hok! like courting complete—hok!—courting complete—" Losing the thread of his narrative at this point simultaneously with his loss of breath, their informant looked up and down the field apparently for some clue to it. "Well, I see our mis'ess and a soldier—a-ha-a-wk!"

"D—— the boy!" said Gabriel.

"'Tis only my manner, Mister Oak, if ye'll excuse it," said Cain Ball, looking reproachfully at Oak, with eyes drenched in their own dew.

"Here's some cider for him—that'll cure his throat," said Jan

Coggan, lifting a flagon of cider, pulling out the cork, and applying the hole to Cainy's mouth; Joseph Poorgrass in the meantime beginning to think apprehensively of the serious consequences that would follow Cainy Ball's strangulation in his cough, and the history of his Bath adventures dying with him.

"For my poor self, I always say 'please God' afore I do anything," said Joseph, in an unboastful voice; "and so should you, Cain Ball. 'Tis a great safeguard, and might perhaps save you from being choked to death some day."

Mr. Coggan poured the liquor with unstinted liberality at the suffering Cain's circular mouth; half of it running down the side of the flagon, and half of what reached his mouth running down outside his throat, and half of what ran in going the wrong way, and being coughed and sneezed around the persons of the gathered reapers in the form of a rarefied cider fog, which for a moment hung in the sunny air like a small exhalation.

"There's a great clumsy sneeze! Why can't ye have better manners, you young dog!" said Coggan, withdrawing the flagon.

"The cider went up my nose!" cried Cainy, as soon as he could speak; "and now 'tis gone down my neck, and into my poor dumb felon, and over my shiny buttons and all my best cloze!"

"The pore lad's cough is terrible unfortunate," said Matthew Moon. "And a great history on hand, too. Bump his back, shepherd."

"'Tis my nater," mourned Cain. "Mother says I always was so excitable when my feelings were worked up to a point."

"True, true," said Joseph Poorgrass. "The Balls were always a very excitable family. I knowed the boy's grandfather—a truly nervous and modest man, even to genteel refinement. 'Twas blush, blush with him, almost as much as 'tis with me—not but that 'tis a fault in me."

"Not at all, Master Poorgrass," said Coggan. "'Tis a very noble quality in ye."

"Heh-heh! well, I wish to noise nothing abroad—nothing at all," murmured Poorgrass, diffidently. "But we are born to things—that's true. Yet I would rather my trifle were hid; though, perhaps, a high nature is a little high, and at my birth all things were possible to my Maker and he may have begrudged no gifts. . . . But under your bushel, Joseph! under your bushel with you! A strange desire, neighbours, this desire to hide, and no praise due. Yet there is a Sermon on the Mount with a calendar of the blessed at the head, and certain meek men may be named therein."

"Cainy's grandfather was a very clever man," said Matthew Moon. "Invented a apple-tree out of his own head, which is called by his name to this day—the Early Ball. You know 'em, Jan? A Quarrington grafted on a Tom Putt, and a Rathe-ripe upon top o' that again. 'Tis trew a' used to bide about in a public-house in a way he had no business by rights, but there—' a were a clever man in the sense of the term."

"Now, then," said Gabriel impatiently, "what did you see, Cain?"

"I seed our mis'ess go into a sort of a park place, where there's seats, and shrubs and flowers, arm-in-crook with a soldier," continued Cainy firmly, and with a dim sense that his words were very effective as regarded Gabriel's emotions. "And I think the soldier was Sergeant Troy. And they sat there together for more than half-an-hour, talking moving things, and she once was crying almost to death. And when they came out her eyes were shining and she was as white as a lily; and they looked into one another's faces, as desperately friendly as a man and woman can be."

Gabriel's features seemed to get thinner. "Well, what did you see besides?"

"Oh, all sorts."

"White as a lily? You are sure 'twas she?"

"Yes."

"Well, what besides?"

"Great glass windows to the shops, and great clouds in the sky, full of rain, and old wooden trees in the country round."

"You stun-poll! What will ye say next!" said Coggan.

"Let en alone," interposed Joseph Poorgrass. "The boy's maning is that the sky and the earth in the kingdom of Bath is not altogether different from ours here. 'Tis for our good to gain knowledge of strange cities, and as such the boy's words should be suffered, so to speak it."

"And the people of Bath," continued Cain, "never need to light their fires except as a luxury, for the water springs up out of the earth ready boiled for use."

"'Tis true as the light," testified Matthew Moon. "I've heard other navigators say the same thing."

"They drink nothing else there," said Cain, "and seem to enjoy it, to see how they swaller it down."

"Well, it seems a barbarous practice enough to us, but I daresay the natives think nothing of it," said Matthew.

"And don't victuals spring up as well as drink?" asked Coggan, twirling his eye.

"No—I own to a blot there in Bath—a true blot. God didn't provide 'em with victuals as well as drink, and 'twas a drawback I couldn't get over at all."

"Well, 'tis a curious place, to say the least," observed Moon; "and it must be a curious people that live therein."

"Miss Everdene and the soldier were walking about together, you say?" said Gabriel, returning to the group.

"Ay, and she wore a beautiful gold-colour silk gown, trimmed with black lace, that would have stood alone without legs inside if required. 'Twas a very winsome sight; and her hair was brushed splendid. And when the sun shone upon the bright gown and his red coat—my! how handsome they looked. You could see 'em all the length of the street."

"And what then?" murmured Gabriel.

"And then I went into Griffin's to have my boots hobbled, and then I went to Riggs's batty-cake shop, and asked 'em for a penneth of the cheapest and nicest stales, that were all but blue-mouldy but not quite. And whilst I was chawing 'em down I walked on and seed a clock with a face as big as a baking-trendle——"

"But that's nothing to do with mistress!"

"I'm coming to that, if you'll leave me alone, Mister Oak!" remonstrated Cainy. "If you excites me, perhaps you'll bring on my cough, and then I shan't be able to tell ye nothing."

"Yes—let him tell it his own way," said Coggan.

Gabriel settled into a despairing attitude of patience, and Cainy went on:—

"And there were great large houses, and more people all the week long than at Weatherbury club-walking on White Tuesdays. And I went to grand churches and chapels. And how the parson would pray! Yes, he would kneel down, and put up his hands together, and make the holy gold rings on his fingers gleam and twinkle in yer eyes, that he'd earned by praying so excellent well!—Ah yes, I wish I lived there."

"Our poor Parson Thirdly can't get no money to buy such rings," said Matthew Moon thoughtfully. "And as good a man as ever walked. I don't believe poor Thirdly have a single one, even of humblest tin or copper. Such a great ornament as they'd be to him on a dull afternoon, when he's up in the pulpit lighted by the wax candles! But 'tis impossible, poor man. Ah, to think how unequal things be."

"Perhaps he's made of different stuff than to wear 'em," said Gabriel grimly. "Well, that's enough of this. Go on, Cainy—quick."

"Oh—and the new style of parsons wear moustaches and long beards," continued the illustrious traveller, "and look like Moses and Aaron complete, and make we fokes in the congregation feel all over like the children of Israel."

"A very right feeling—very," said Joseph Poorgrass.

"And there's two religions going on in the nation now—High Church and High Chapel. And, thinks I, I'll play fair; so I went to High Church in the morning, and High Chapel in the afternoon."

"A right and proper boy," said Joseph Poorgrass.

"Well, at High Church they pray singing, and believe in all the colours of the rainbow; and at High Chapel they pray preaching, and believe in drab and whitewash only. And then—I didn't see no more of Miss Everdene at all."

"Why didn't you say so before, then?" exclaimed Oak, with much disappointment.

"Ah," said Matthew Moon, "she'll wish her cake dough if so be she's over intimate with that man."

"She's not over intimate with him," said Gabriel, indignantly.

"She would know better," said Coggan. "Our mis'ess has too much sense under those knots of black hair to do such a mad thing."

"You see, he's not a coarse ignorant man, for he was well brought up," said Matthew, dubiously. "'Twas only wildness that made him a soldier, and maids rather like your man of sin."

"Now, Cain Ball," said Gabriel restlessly, "can you swear in the most awful form that the woman you saw was Miss Everdene?"

"Cain Ball, you are no longer a babe and suckling," said Joseph in the sepulchral tone the circumstances demanded, "and you know what taking an oath is. 'Tis a horrible testament, mind ye, which you say and seal with your blood-stone, and the prophet Matthew tells us that on whomsoever it shall fall it will grind him to powder. Now, before all the work-folk here assembled can you swear to your words as the shepherd asks ye?"

"Please no, Mister Oak!" said Cainy, looking from one to the other with great uneasiness at the spiritual magnitude of the position. "I don't mind saying 'tis true, but I don't like to say 'tis d—— true, if that's what you mane."

"Cain, Cain, how can you!" said Joseph sternly. "You are asked to swear in a holy manner, and you swear like wicked Shimei, the son of Gera, who cursed as he came. Young man, fie!"

"No, I don't! 'Tis you want to squander a pore boy's soul, Joseph Poorgrass—that's what 'tis!" said Cain, beginning to cry. "All I mane is that in common truth 'twas Miss Everdene and Sergeant Troy, but in the horrible so-help-me truth that ye want to make of it perhaps 'twas somebody else."

"There's no getting at the rights of it," said Gabriel, turning to his work.

"Cain Ball, you'll come to a bit of bread!" groaned Joseph Poorgrass.

Then the reapers' hooks were flourished again, and the old sounds went on. Gabriel, without making any pretence of being lively, did nothing to show that he was particularly dull. However, Coggan knew pretty nearly how the land lay, and when they were in a nook together he said—

"Don't take on about her, Gabriel. What difference does it make whose sweetheart she is, since she can't be yours?"

"That's the very thing I say to myself," said Gabriel.

Chapman's Dramatic Works.*

It is a fair question for the curious, why the comedies and tragedies of one of the greatest of the Elizabethan dramatists have never been printed in a complete form until now. Some of them, in fact, are altogether lost, and most of them have never attained the dignity of a second edition. And now that we have them all before us, this very edition recalls the remarkable fact, that Shakspeare alone, of all the dramatic writers who wrote under Elizabeth, James, and Charles, can be named as an English classic. More than this, there is no other English play-writer, except (strangely enough) Sheridan, who can take his place among English classics. For by a classic must be meant, not merely one whose works are read by those who study the literature of a country in its completeness, but one who is a classic in the sense that the Greek dramatists are classics, and that Shakspeare, Bacon, and Milton are classics. In this sense the whole race of English dramatists, so great and popular in their day, of whom Ben Jonson and Chapman are among the earlier types, and Dryden one of the later, can hardly be numbered among those who still help to form the existing English mind. To the ordinary English gentleman they are known only by extracts.

Nor are the causes of this failure to ensure immortality very obvious at first sight. One cause which is commonly cited is by no means sufficient to account for the fact. It is commonly said that the old plays are licentious and broad, and that it is our modern delicacy, or prudery, or fastidiousness, call it which we will, which has condemned the older writers to oblivion. Yet this can hardly be the whole case, for who can be more "broad" than Chaucer in some of his *Canterbury Tales*? Yet Chaucer is undeniably an English classic. He is broad, not only in the extreme plainness with which he calls a spade a spade, but he is broad in the very substance of some of his stories themselves. Our modern plays, too, are often broad enough in their plots and in their *doubles entendres*; and it is manifest that the supposed delicacy of mind which forbids the reprinting of the elder plays, or of Wycherley, or Congreve, or Vanbrugh, or Beaumont and Fletcher, for miscellaneous family reading, is not a little the result of that utter hypocrisy which pervades our popular talk and popular belief in all matters of religion and morals. There is no harm in the world, it is thought, in the singing of "*La ci darem*" in the most

* *The Comedies and Tragedies of George Chapman*, now first collected, with Illustrative Notes and a Memoir of the Author. In Three Volumes. London: John Pearson, York Street, Covent Garden, 1873.

respectably rigid of drawing-rooms ; but then are not the words in Italian, and is not the music by the "divine Mozart?" So it is with another of the divine Mozart's whole operas, *Le Nozze di Figaro*. Is it not all in Italian? Or, in other words, is it not all a *double entendre* from beginning to end, which the mammas may understand, but not the more innocent members of proper society? The ballet-girl of the period is, indeed, by no means a *double entendre*, and she is a phenomenon to be carefully studied by those who would estimate the sincerity of the religious professions of the age we are living in.

Here, in truth, are two of the most striking illustrations of the difference between the social ideas of the ages of Elizabeth and Victoria. Under Elizabeth and James we have the talk of Holywell Street uttered by players of the male sex alone, for the appearance of women upon the stage was unknown: under Victoria we have the most highly improving sentiments liped by women in men's clothing, supported by clouds of ballet-dancers, who, whether they are dressed in male or female clothing, are invariably girls. What a marvellous change in the notions of society as to what is moral! And what a honeycombing of scepticism does it not betray in our modern world as to the real standard of right and wrong!

Then there is another curious circumstance about the dramatists of the Tudor and Stuart period. They furnish but a very slight reflection of the theological and political strifes of the times. It has even been maintained that Shakspeare was a Roman Catholic, and entirely as the proof fails, it is sufficiently suggestive that the attempt to prove him one should ever have been made. No doubt the chief actors in London being the "King's players," or the "Queen's players," they had singularly little liberty for expressing any political sentiments which they might have held. How little that liberty was, may be gathered from one of the few adventures that chequered the life of George Chapman. In conjunction with Ben Jonson and Marston he wrote the comedy of *Eastward Hoe* in the first year of James the First's reign. In this play they indulged in a few of those reflections upon the Scotch, which were then so popular among English people; and "Gentle Jamie," in his wrath, sent all the three poets to the Fleet, where they were very nearly undergoing the characteristic gentle penalty of those days, in having their noses slit. Drummond says that Jonson declared that he had no hand in writing the offending passages, but that he would not desert his friends in their trouble, and went to prison with them. As it was, James, who was more forgiving than is usual with cowards, soon set all three at liberty, and took to admiring Chapman's writings, and made no objection to the patronage which his son Henry Prince of Wales bestowed upon him.

That the king ever saw or heard of the speech in praise of tobacco in the comedy of *Monsieur D'Olive*, which Chapman wrote soon afterwards, is hardly to be believed. If he did see it, and yet continued his tolerance of the writer, or allowed it to be acted, only proves that his hatred of tobacco was less deep than his fondness for the Scotch. The speech

is so amusing in itself, and so characteristic of Chapman when he was in his comic vein, that we must extract it as it stands, only taking the liberty of spelling it as people now spell. The editor of the present edition, on the contrary, has preserved the spelling of 1606, a proceeding which will by no means tend to popularise the poet with modern readers, and strikes as not a little pedantic. There is good reason for retaining the original spelling of Chaucer, for his English was not our English; and there are philological reasons which forbid the modernising of his spelling as a barbarism. But there is no more reason for spelling Chapman otherwise than as we spell the language which he wrote, than for performing the same operation with Shakspeare. For the same reason, is there not a little pedantry in printing the title-page of the book without any punctuation whatever, as if it were a Latin inscription eighteen hundred years old? Here, however, is Monsieur D'Olive in modern trim, deserving, in these days of illuminated quotations, to be hung up in the smoking-room of every club in London.

"Tobacco," says he, "that excellent plant, the use whereof (as of fifth element) the world cannot want, is that little shop of nature, wherein her whole workmanship is abridged, where you may see earth kindled into fire, the fire breathe out an exhalation, which entering in at the mouth walks through the regions of a man's brain, drives out all ill vapours, but itself draws down all bad humours by the mouth, which in time might breed a scab over the whole body, if indeed they have not; a plant of singular use, for on the one side, nature being an enemy to vacuity and emptiness, and on the other, there being so many empty brains in the world as there are, how shall nature's course be continued? How shall these empty brains be filled, but with air, nature's instrument for that purpose? If with air, what so proper as your fume? what fume so healthful as your perfume? what perfume so sovereign as tobacco? Besides the excellent edge it gives a man's wit (as they can best judge that have been present at a feast of tobacco, where commonly all good wits are consorted), what variety of discourse it begets! What sparks of wit it yields it is a world to hear . . . For garlick, I will not say, because it is a plant of our own country, but it may cure the diseases of the country, but for the diseases of the Court, they are out of the element of garlick to medicine. To conclude, as there is no enemy to garlick but tobacco, so there is no friend to garlick but a sheep's head; and so I conclude."

Another notable characteristic of the early dramatists is their almost complete abstinence from the religious conflicts which were waging all around them. Those conflicts were never lulled. The ferocity of the antagonism between Protestant and Catholic was succeeded by a bitterness, almost fiercer still, between the Puritan and the Anti-Puritan. As the country gradually attained prosperity under Elizabeth, and remained prosperous under James, the hatreds of the two parties entered more and more into the social and family life of the people. To the vast mass of

the people, who cared little whether or not they outwardly conformed to the new religion, it was a serious matter whether their dress, their amusements and their marriage arrangements should be dictated by the new rigorism, or whether the old jovial ways of the country should be left untouched. In fact, under James the struggle was beginning to take a far more distinctly religious character than it possessed during the professedly Reformation struggle. Nobody can study the real character of that struggle, without seeing that the purely religious element had wonderfully little to do with the conduct of either side.

But under James the whole country was seething with personal hatreds and personal convictions tending to a vehement civil war in which the victory was finally won by the party which would vigorously put down all plays and play-acting as the work of the devil himself. Yet, neither in the comedies nor the tragedies of the day do we find anything that can be called a picture, or even caricature, of the passions that were burning throughout the country. Here and there passages and characters may be found which were more or less suggested by the theological antipathies which were soon to set Englishmen cutting each other's throats; but that is all.

Nor can we attribute this silence as to the polemics of the time to any of that sort of fastidiousness or good feeling which now banishes such matters from the stage. Fastidiousness was unknown to the men and also to the women of that vigorous age. They said what they thought, and they said it with a strength of language which would make our women blush, and our men open their eyes, if such sounds were now to strike their ears. The famous *Histrio-Mastix*, or *Scourge for Stage Players*, which Prynne published in 1632, is at once a token of the hatred with which the Puritans regarded everything connected with the play-house, and of the gall, unmingled with honey, with which each side bespattered its antagonists. Chapman was still alive and a very old man. The style of the *Scourge* is as coarse and scurrilous as anything that the age produced, and if anything could have stirred the dramatic writers to a frenzy of reprisals, Prynne's pamphlet was precisely the thing to do it.

But what is most notable, as enabling us to treat the plays of the time from the purely critical point of view, is the fact which everybody knows, that the *Histrio-Mastix* was at once made the subject of a Government prosecution. Prynne was already odious in the eyes of Laud and the rest of the High Church party, both from his ecclesiastical views and his moral rigorism, and from the untiring energy with which he annoyed the Archbishop and his friends of the ultra "Apostolical Succession" school. But he had now contrived to exasperate the Court and the courtiers past all bearing. Plays and masques and other amusements, such as we should now call private theatricals, were among the most fashionable of amusements, the Queen herself having acted in a pastoral at Somerset House. Whether or not Prynne expected what befell him cannot be known; but when he had made both an archbishop and a queen his special enemies, he might have anticipated as savage a punish-

ment as those hard-hitting times delighted to inflict. And a tolerably severe penalty he had to pay. The attorney-general prosecuted him in the Star Chamber, and he was sentenced to pay a fine of 3,000*l.*, to be expelled from the University of Oxford and the Society of Lincoln's Inn; to be degraded from the bar; to be twice set in the pillory; to have both his ears cut off; and to be imprisoned for life.

Here, then, we think we have the key to the interesting literary problem which must have often occurred to students of the old dramatists, and particularly to those who take up the plays of Chapman himself. The tragedies and comedies which have come down to us from those stormy times were, in no sense, the dramatic literature of the nation. They were the dramatic literature of the Court and its fashionable followers; and they were not only tolerable in their completeness, but often admirable in the eyes of that exclusive world. The plays in which the multitude delighted were more like the old moralities and mysteries which had come down to them from the pre-Reformation days, in which coarse buffoonery was the predominant element, and no trace of poetry was ever to be detected. The lords and ladies who applauded these plays, at the same time that they applauded Shakspeare's, were almost the only people in the country who could understand the unquestionable poetic beauties of these dramatists, without being repelled by their faults, as plays professing to represent the actual life of men and women. Their education was sometimes very much above the average education of the fine ladies and gentlemen who now throng the operas in London, when one popular star is singing her utmost to outsing another popular star. They had not yet come down to that depth of dulness which has so long stigmatised a classical education as unfit for women, and especially for women of what is called "birth and fortune." Often, as appears from a passage of Chapman, many of the aristocratic audience would sit upon the stage itself, and the acting and speaking were criticised from that strictly literary point of view which is practically unknown to the living generation of play-goers.

The dramas of Chapman and the other contemporaries and followers of Shakspeare were thus the representatives of that transition state of public taste, which was the natural result of the abolition of the miracle plays and gross absurdities of the middle ages. Critics and dramatists alike had not yet realised the truth that a play ought, above all things, to be an exhibition of the passions and motives of human nature, as it is in its essence, in every stage of civilisation. A wonderful burst of the genuine poetic fervour had accompanied the growth of the English people as a Protestant and freedom-loving race, but the educated world had yet to learn under what conditions the poem could become the play; and was contented with poetic beauties in whatsoever companionship they found them.

It is to no purpose to name the great name of Shakspeare in opposition to this view. He stood alone then, just as he stands alone in the

literature of the whole world. He belonged to no school, just as none of those who were his contemporaries belonged to him. It was his intensely sympathetic conception of the varieties of human nature, not as embodiments of ideal conceptions, but as living realities, which made him what he was, and which separates him by an impassable barrier from every one who wrote when he wrote, or who has written since he died. The only real anticipation of the perfect "humanity" of Shakspeare is to be detected in the old Greek tragedy and comedy, and of that tragedy and comedy Shakspeare himself knew nothing. But it is immortal, and for the very same reason that has given Shakspeare his immortality. It is, as we think, an error to criticise the plays of Shakspeare in any close connection with those of his contemporaries and those of the generation that lived after him. They belonged to the school of their day, but he belonged to no school whatsoever. That he would have been what he was if he had lived before the Reformation had set Englishmen free, and while the English language was still unformed, is not, of course, to be maintained. But at the same time, he stood as completely apart from the fashionable school of his day, of which Chapman is, perhaps, the most typical representative, as from the boisterous, coarse, and extravagant plays, which constituted the enjoyment of the multitude.

Nor, again, is there any historical ground for believing, that Shakspeare was ever a favourite dramatist with the miscellaneous multitude, as is so often assumed by writers who mourn over the "decay of the British drama." Whether in connection with the Elizabethan or the Tudor dramatists there has been a general consent among critics to lament over the fact that the Shakspearian tragedies and comedies are now no longer those which the English nation at large flocks to hear and see. But this lament, so far as it blames this present generation, has no foundation in the facts of the past. There is no ground for supposing that he was ever valued by the people as he is now loved by the critical readers of England, and Germany, and Italy, and even of France. Among his own contemporaries he was doubtless accounted the first among all the writers whom the Court applauded; but there never was a period in the history of England when his plays were presented to an audience like that of the Greeks who witnessed the representations of *Æschylus*, and *Sophocles*, and *Aristophanes*, and *Euripides*.

In truth, the moment we pass from Shakspeare to Chapman and all others, we feel that we are in another world, and we understand at once that while Shakspeare is still acted, and would be still more frequently acted if anything like a tolerably complete company could be found to act him, Chapman, Ben Jonson, Marston, and the rest, are still the delight of students only, and that the general reader will only love them because of the beauties which are enshrined in an intolerable quantity of the unnatural, forced and pedantic theatricalisms of their day. Even the more modern comedies of a later time, of which Vanbrugh and Wycherley may be named as typical examples, are banished from the drawing-room table

as well as from the theatre, not only because of the tone of their plots and the freedom of their dialogue, but because there is little of any true naturalness in their characters, and they appeal more to the artificial tastes of an audience of fine ladies and gentlemen than to the sympathies of that humanity which is common to every age and every class.

There can be no doubt that the courtier audiences who went to see and to enjoy plays like those of Chapman, sought an enjoyment very unlike that which everybody seeks who now goes to the play or to the opera. They went in cool blood to criticise, to applaud, to enjoy, or to condemn. They were satisfied with fine or poetic passages, even though the general course of the play and the dialogue was unnatural in the extreme. They loved an exhibition of what in those days was "learning" in the play-writer. And this fondness for the introduction of classical history and mythology was not that ridiculous pedantry which we should now account it. It was not Chapman alone who, through his translation of Homer, had his head filled with the ideas and machinery of the Greek Olympus, and seemed to be as much at home among heroes, gods, and goddesses as among living men and women. It was the same with other play-writers of the day. A familiarity with the literature of Greece and Rome was the one recognised sign that the writer was an educated man. There were no other tokens of high culture which the playwright could exhibit; while the very language that he wrote was still clearing itself of its mediæval forms, and of the cumbrous and stilted metaphors which it had borrowed from the Italian renaissance. Under Elizabeth and 'James the English language and English literature were emphatically creating themselves, and thus it was that the plays of the time are to be estimated rather by the jewels which may be extracted from them, than by their general quality or completeness.

This is singularly the case with Chapman, of whom Charles Lamb has happily said that "he would have made a great epic poet, if he has not abundantly shown himself to be one; for his Homer is not so properly a translation as the stories of Achilles and Ulysses re-written." It is remarkable, at the same time, that Lamb, in the short criticism which he has prefixed to the quotation from Chapman, in his *Specimen of English Dramatic Poets*, confines his remarks almost entirely to his style, while admitting at the same time his inability to create a living human being. In passages "which are less purely dramatic," Lamb holds, and, as we think, justly, that of all the English play-writers Chapman approaches the nearest to Shakspeare.

Even in *The Blind Beggar of Alexandria*, the earliest of his plays that are not lost, and a very poor performance indeed, it seems wonderful to light upon passages like these following:—

Though my years would have me old, I am not,
But have the gentle jerk of youth in me,
As fresh as he that hath a maiden's chin.

Delicious love
Hath been the fig I ate before this wine,
Which kills the taste of these delicious cates.

The next is quaint and slightly "long drawn out," but it is beautiful nevertheless :—

Head-tires enchased in order like the stars,
With perfect great and fine-cut precious stones,
One hath bright Ariadne's crown in it,
Even in the figure it presents in heaven ;
Another hath the fingers of Diana,
And Berenice's ever-beaming hair ;
Another hath the bright Andromeda,
With both her silver wrists bound to a rock,
And Perseus that did loose her to save her life,
All set in number, and in perfect form,
Even like the asterisms fixt in heaven,
And even as you may see in moonshine nights,
The moon and stars reflecting in their streams.

The next play that Chapman wrote is better in construction, and not so impossible. The dialogue, too, is more easy and natural. But it is only by comparison that the story is less impossible than that of *The Blind Beggar of Alexandria* and its "breadth" is startling, and shows what a gulf separates the higher classes of English society from the lords and ladies who, under Elizabeth, sat and enjoyed its extremely plain speaking. It supplies, too, a curious illustration of the fashionable learning of the day, and shows that King James was by no means so singular in his pedantic displays as we are tempted to imagine him. It must have been an odd time, indeed, when a young lord would thus soliloquise and apostrophise "Marc Cicero" :—

"Quid Dei potes videri magnum in rebus humanis quæ æterni omnes to thy notas sic omnibus magna tutor. What can seem strange to him on earthly things to whom the whole course of eternity and the round compass of the world is known? A speech divine; but yet I marvel much how it should spring from thee, Mark Cicero, that sold for glory the sweet peace of life, and make a torment of rich nature's work, wearing thyself by watchful candle-light, when all the smiths and weavers were at rest, and yet was gallant when the lay-bird sung to have a troop of clients at thy gates, armed with religious supplications, such as would make stern Minos laugh to read. Look at our lawyers' bills; not one contains virtue or honest drifts, but he cares, he cares, he cares; for acorns now are in request, but the oak's poor fruit did nourish men; men were like oaks of body, tough and strong; men were like giants then, but pigmies now, but full of villanies as their skin could hold."

This was the kind of classical knowledge which Chapman and others brought from the Oxford and Cambridge of the sixteenth century. He himself passed some time in residence at both of the Universities. "In 1574, or thereabouts," says Wood in his *Athenæ Oxonienses*, "he being

well grounded in school learning, was sent to the University, but whether first to this of Oxon, or that of Cambridge, is to me unknown. Sure I am that he spent some time in Oxon, where he was observed to be most excellent in the Latin and Greek tongues, but not in logic or philosophy, and therefore I presume that that was the reason why he took no degree here." Warton says much the same in his *History of English Poetry*, stating that Chapman "passed two years at Trinity College, Oxford, with a contempt of philosophy, but in close attention to the Greek and Roman classics."

And herein, judging from our point of view, he acted wisely. What they called logic and philosophy in those days was in truth but a mere display of verbal wordsplitting. Aldrich was yet unborn, and the *Barbara Celarent*, which distressed our youthful memories, was known only in the treatises on the scholastic logic which had survived all the changes in religious belief. While Aldrich is now set aside as a mere teacher of artificial intellectual jugglery, what must have been the logic, and with it the philosophy, which Oxford offered three centuries ago to her children? It is necessary, indeed, to remember what was the condition of the scholastic logic in the days when Chapman was an undergraduate in order to understand the taste for quibbling, which was so common with many of the Elizabethan dramatists, and which is not altogether absent from Shakspeare, though Shakspeare was never at either University. The scholastic logic and philosophy, even when at their best, were a dreary substitution of the art of playing with words for the art of thinking. But what must they have been in their decay, when the Reformation had destroyed the *raison d'être* of the professors of the art itself, and it merely lingered as a conservative element in the University curriculum? How obstinately it thus lingered is to be judged from the fact that until Whately hinted at the true art, which John Stuart Mill afterwards developed, the one standard classic was Aldrich, to whose authority Oxford bowed down as if the admirable and accomplished Dean of Christchurch was as great in the science of logic as he was in music and architecture.

It is not, however, in his plays so much as in his translation of Homer that Chapman shows how lovingly he had read the old Greeks and Romans. On this translation he worked, after the completion of the *Humorous Day's Mirth*, not returning to the stage for six years to come. This translation is usually thought by far his greatest work, and whatever be its merits as a translation, according to our modern standards of translation, it has unquestionably been *felt* as a work of real genius by many who cared little for any purely critical standard as to what constitutes a strict translation. Keats declared "that to him the first reading of Chapman's *Homer* was like the discovery of a new planet by an astronomer gazing into the skies. Pope offered it a more qualified homage," and wished "to 'damn it with faint praise,'" declaring that it was a work that Homer might have written before coming to years of

discretion ; but Waller said that he could never read it without a degree of rapture.

The *Iliad* was reprinted in 1843, but we fancy that it is now little known, even to scholars, and we wonder that with the *Odyssey* and one or two other of his classical works it is not now reprinted by one of those enterprising publishers, who love to reprint old books, rather for love than for money. As for conveying to the unlearned reader any true conception of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* of the real Homer himself, every scholar who is not bitten with an inevitable love for translating, knows that it is an impossibility. Everybody knows what the Psalms in prose, themselves a translation, have suffered at the hands of the versifiers. Let the unlearned in Greek meditate on this, and be satisfied that there is only one way to comprehend the infinite charm of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, and that is, to learn to read them with care in Greek. Let them think on Tate and Brady, and Sternhold and Hopkins, and even Keble, and the old Scotch version, and then form their conclusions as to translations from any of the Greek poets. At the same time, if their passion for knowing something of Homer is insurmountable, they ought to add Chapman's version to all the rest ; only let them not think that either Chapman, or Pope, or Cowper, or Lord Derby, or anybody else is Homer himself.

As soon as his translating labours were over Chapman returned, as we have said, to play-writing, and learnt what it was to be shut up in the Fleet by will of the king. One of his best comedies followed his liberation. *All Fools* is one of those comedies which are only not farces, because of the merit of their dialogue, and the less absolute improbability of their story. Here is the ever popular plot of the universal misunderstandings and the trickeries of all the dramatis personæ, but sustained by a dialogue, often rich and musical, and exhibiting that real poetic gift which appears in Chapman's prose almost as in his verse. Few writers, indeed, could be named whose prose runs almost imperceptibly into verse, and in whom the occasional alternations between verse and prose dialogue seem so little unnatural.

One of his next plays, *The Gentleman Usher*, contains one of his finest passages, and it must be quoted at length as an illustration of the sustained quality both of his verse and his ideas, and also in contrast with a piece of prose in which he writes about women in a strain far more like that which was popular among the play-writers, and, which comes to the same thing, the audiences of his day. Thus it is that he makes Strozzi address his wife Cynanche :

Come near me, wife ; I fare the better far
For the sweet food of thy divine advice.
Let no man value at a little price
A virtuous woman's counsel ; her wing'd spirit
Is feathered oftentimes with heavenly words ;
And like her beauty, ravishing and pure.
The weaker body, still the stronger soul,
When good endeavours do her powers apply,

Her love draws nearest man's felicity.
 Oh, what a treasure is a virtuous wife,
 Discreet and loving; not one gift on earth
 Makes a man's life so highly bound to heaven.
 She gives him double forces to endure
 And to enjoy, by being one with him;
 Feeling his joys and griefs with equal sense;
 And like the twins Hippocrates reports,
 If he fetch sighs, she draws her breath as short;
 If he lament, she melts herself in tears;
 If he be glad she triumphs; if he stir
 She moves his way; in all things his sweet ape,
 And is in alteration passing strange.
 Gold is right precious; but his price infects
 With pride and avarice; Authority lifts
 Hats from men's heads, and bows the strongest knees,
 Yet cannot bend in rule the weakest hearts;
 Music delights but one sense, nor choice meats;
 One quickly fades, the others stir to sin.
 But a true wife, both sense and soul delights,
 And mixeth not her good with any ill;
 Her virtues, ruling hearts, all powers command;
 All store, without her, leaves a man but poor,
 And with her, poverty is exceeding store;
 No time is tedious with her, her true worth
 Makes a true husband think his arms enfold,
 With her alone, a complete world engold.

Surely such verse as this, with all its bit of quaintness, is poetry as Lamb said, of the true Shakspearean metal. But whether the fine ladies and gentlemen of those free and easy days loved it as well as the sub-joined piece of prose from the comedy of *May Day*, may well be doubted. This is the way that Ludovico advises his friend Aurelio to press his suit with a woman:—"She shall endure thee; do the worst thou canst to her; aye, and endure thee till thou canst not endure her. But then thou must use thyself like a wise man, and a wise man, how deep soever she is in thy thoughts, carry not the print of it in thy looks; be bold and careless, and stand not sauntering afar off, as I have seen you, like a dog in a furmety pot, that licks his chops and wags his tail, and fain would lay his lips to it, but he fears 'tis too hot for him; that's the only way to make her too hot for thee. He that holds religious and sacred thoughts of a woman, he that bears so reverend a respect to her, that he will not touch her but with a kissed hand and a timorous heart; he that adores her like his goddess, let him be sure that she will shun him like her slave. Alas, good souls, women of themselves are tractable and tactable enough, and would return *Quid* for *Quod* still, but we are they that spoil 'em, and we shall answer for't another day. We are they that put a kind of wanton melancholy into 'em, that makes 'em think their noses bigger than their faces, greater than the sun in brightness; and whereas nature made 'em but half fools, we make 'em all fool. And this is our palpable flattery of them, where they had rather have plain dealing."

Of Chapman's tragedies, the most characteristic are the four semi-historical plays, *Bussy d'Ambois*, *The Revenge of Bussy d'Ambois*, *Byron's Conspiracy*, and *Byron's Tragedy*. In reality they are dramatic poems rather than dramas; Chapman's failure in inventing real living men and women being more conspicuous in tragedy than in comedy. No one can deny their bombast; but that any competent critic, or any real poet, could detect nothing in them but bombast, is astonishing. Dryden's criticism especially deserves quoting, partly as a master-piece of vilification, and partly as an illustration of what can be written against bombast by a great poet who could himself descend to the lowest bombastic level. Jealousy there could be none, except that *Bussy d'Ambois* was still sometimes played on the London stage. The quotation also may be profitably compared with the current theatrical newspaper criticisms of to-day, of which it may safely be said that not one word will ever be read a score of years hence. Thus, then, writes Dryden:—"I have sometimes wondered in the reading, what was become of those glaring colours which amazed me in *Bussy d'Ambois* upon the theatre; but when I had taken up what I supposed a fallen star, I found I had been cozened with a jelly; nothing but a cold, dull mass, which glittered no longer than when it was shooting; a dwarfish thought, dressed up in gigantic words, repetition in abundance, looseness of expression, and gross hyperbole; the sense of one line expanded prodigiously into ten; and, to sum up all, incorrect English, and a hideous mingle of false poetry and true nonsense; or at best, a scantling of wit, which lay gasping for life, and groaning beneath a heap of rubbish. A famous modern poet used to sacrifice every year a Statius to Virgil's Manes; and I have indignation enough to burn a *D'Ambois* annually to the memory of Jonson." This comes from the *Epistle Dedicatory* to *The Spanish Fryar*, and is indeed a very master-piece of vituperation. Walter Scott, too, editing *The Spanish Fryar*, adds his own opinion, that "if Dryden could have exhausted every copy of this bombast performance, the public would have been no great losers." Yet in this play is a passage which may rank with Dryden's finest bursts of angry and most expressive metaphor:—

Your voice

Is like an Eastern wind, that where it flies,
Knits nets of caterpillars, with which you catch
The prime of all the fruit the kingdom yields.
You have a tongue so scandalous, 'twill cut
A perfect crystal; and a breath that will
Kill to that wall a spider.

Less ambitious in plan were some of Chapman's later performances. *The May Day* and *The Widow's Tears* (in the latter of which we have him by no means glorifying women in general and widows in particular) were published in 1611 and 1612. In 1613, on occasion of the marriage of the Princess Elizabeth with the Palsgrave, the Societies of Lincoln's Inn and the Middle Temple showed their loyalty by exhibiting a superb

masque at Whitehall, at the cost of more than 1,000*l.* for which Chapman wrote the verses, and Inigo Jones designed the machinery. Of Chapman's gifts in the way of writing such trifles, Jonson thought highly, for he said to Drummond that "next himself, only Fletcher and Chapman could make a masque."

After this Chapman returned to his beloved translations, including Hesiod, Juvenal, Musæus and Petrarch. Many years afterwards he wrote his tragedy of *Cæsar and Pompey*. And then "at length," writes Wood, "this most eminent and reverend poet, having lived seventy-seven years in this vain and transitory world, made his last exit in the parish of St. Giles' in the Fields, near London," and over his grave was set a monument by his friend Inigo Jones, in which he is styled *poeta Homericus, Philosophus verus, etsi Christianus poeta plus quam celebris*. Compare this with the views concerning Chapman and his contemporaries for which Prynne lost his ears, his 3,000*l.*, and his liberty for life.

Modern Sorcery.

HAD someone stood under the crystal dome of the first great Exhibition, and foretold that in a quarter of a century after that inauguration of the millennium of common sense, England would incur the denunciations of the Hebrew prophets on a land of wizards and necromancers, and of those who "seek after familiar spirits," how merrily should we have laughed the absurd prediction to scorn! Not much more attention should we have paid to it even had we known that just three years before (in 1848) Miss Kate Fox, of Hydesville, State of New York, at the mature age of nine, had received monitions from the spirit world in the form of a hail-storm of raps on the walls and floors of her abode. It seemed, indeed, scarcely more likely that the juvenile "medium" should open a new dispensation for Europe and America, than that her contemporary little visionaries (or naughty little impostors, as the case may be) of La Salette should send half France on pious pilgrimage to the spot where they saw, or did not see, the Virgin. The lesson that great events may spring from small causes, and that the foolish things of the world not seldom confound the wise, is, however, by no means a new one for mankind, and we have now very plainly to reckon with Spiritualism as one of the prominent facts of the age. We will not take upon ourselves to guess how many disciples it may boast in America before these sheets pass to the press; a few millions, more or less, seem to count for little in the statements of its triumphant advocates; but here, in England, there are evidences enough of its flourishing condition. In nearly every company may be met at least one lady or gentleman who looks grave and uncomfortable when the subject is treated with levity; confesses to a conviction that there is "something in it;" and challenges disproof of miracles which she or he has actually beheld, heard, and handled. Not seldom are to be seen persons in a later stage of faith, easily recognisable by wild and vision-seeking eyes, and hands and feet in perpetual nervous agitation, who take no interest in other conversation, but eagerly pour out narratives, arguments, and appeals concerning Spiritualism whenever they can make an opportunity introducing the subject. Even the pulpit is no longer free from spiritualistic interpretations of religious mysteries; and the periodical press, which long confined itself to such attacks and refutations as those by Lord Amberley, in the *Fortnightly Review*, by an anonymous writer in the *New Quarterly Magazine*, and by a well-known physiologist in the *Quarterly Review* (October, 1871), has now opened its columns to two very remarkable papers in its defence, by Dr. Alfred Wallace (*Fortnightly*

Review, May and June, 1874). This double essay, indeed, by the distinguished traveller and fellow-originator with Dr. Darwin of the "Doctrine of Natural Selection," may be justly said to mark an epoch in the progress of the movement, and we can scarcely do wrong in taking it as the first serious challenge to us from competent authority, to give to the marvels of Spiritualism a fair and full investigation.

To many readers, indeed, we believe it has not unsuccessfully so appealed; causing them to hesitate as to whether they were justified in holding back any longer from enquiry, even while the process remains to them eminently distasteful. In view of such a dilemma it may be not inopportune to discuss briefly, *not* the Evidences of Spiritualism, but the preliminary question—Whether we are intellectually or morally bound to examine and weigh those evidences? Spiritualists, to do them justice, very candidly warn us that the task is no trivial one to be performed in a hurry. They scoff indignantly at the notion that five unsuccessful *séances* (in one of which Di Vernon appeared as an historical character, and, in another, Socrates with a straight nose and a disinclination to speak Greek) were sufficient to warrant Lord Amberley in pronouncing Spiritualism an imposition; and they bid us admire men who, like Dr. Sexton, are prepared to spend fifteen years in inquiry before the "needful evidence" to convince them is vouchsafed.* To sift and collate the mass of evidence already produced; to cross-examine the witnesses, and weigh the value of their individual testimony; finally, to institute the requisite actual experiments at *séances* innumerable, would be to exceed the labours of Hercules, and repeat the weariness of the Tichborne trial. It is not too much to insist that excellent reason should be shown for the devotion of so much time and toil to such an end; nor need we be alarmed at the adoption by Spiritualists of the tone of high moral indignation against indolent non-inquirers, natural to all persons who think they are advocating some important discovery. Few amongst us who have reached middle life regret that we did not obey the solicitations of early friends to devote the years of our prime to investigations of the "discoveries" of St. John Long, Spurzheim, and Reichenbach,—to testing the therapeutic agencies of tar-water, "tractors," and brandy and salt; or nicely studying the successive solutions triumphantly propounded of the problem of human flight and of perpetual motion. We have borne with tolerable equanimity to be called hasty and prejudiced in these matters; and we may now endure the taunt of Spiritualists that we display indifference to truths possibly indefinitely valuable to the human race. *Some* limits there must needs be to the duty of inquiring into everything proposed to us as a subject of investigation; and those limits we may perhaps in the present case find in the nature of the subject, the methods of the investigation to be pursued, and the results which follow in the contingency of such inquiries proving successful.

* *Quarterly Review*, May 1874, p. 651.

The propensity which ethnologists attribute, especially to Touranian races, to seek after intercourse with inferior grades of spiritual existence, or (to give it the old name) the passion for Sorcery, is one which seems to flourish like the olive, the Phoenix of trees. Cut down, or burnt down, in one land or age, it springs up and branches forth afresh in the next; and while the main tendency of human thought seems constantly towards a stricter monotheism, a counter eddy of the current for ever fills and re-fills the invisible world with legions of imps, ghosts, and lying spirits, meaner and more puerile than human nature in its basest condition. Fifty years ago such delusions seemed to have ebbed out, and the few writers who dealt with them, spoke of them as things of the past; and assured us that, save in some Tartar tent in the East, or Gipsy one in the West, magic and incantations would be heard no more. The future historian of the England of to-day may truly relate that such incantations were more common in London in 1874 than they were in Palestine when the witch of Endor deluded Saul; or in Byzantium, when Santabaren restored his long lost son to the arms of the Emperor Basil the Macedonian.*

What is the origin of this widespread and seemingly ineradicable propensity? Of course the answer which first suggests itself is, that it is the result of a most natural and blameless curiosity to learn the mysteries of that life into which we ourselves expect to pass through the gates of the tomb, and wherein it is our hope that the beloved ones who have left us have already entered. That in some cases this is the real spring of the desire, we will not question. But it is certain that the passion for Sorcery has far other springs beside, and that those who addict themselves to it most completely have neither ardent longings for immortality on their own account, nor common reverence for the dead. The special characteristic of the propensity, and of the practices to which it gives rise, is the *absence* of all the more delicate sentiments or spiritual aspirations of true human love, or true religion; and the presence, in their stead, of a brutal familiarity and irreverence as regards the dead, and of a gross materialism touching the experiences of communion, divine or human.

In this respect superstitious Sacerdotalism and Sorcery have in all ages borne some strong features of resemblance, even while mutually denouncing one another. Each of them disregards really spiritual gifts as needful to qualify Priest or Medium for intercourse with the unseen world; and relies upon rites and incantations, rather than upon such liftings-up of the human soul in longing and prayer, as should draw (if anything might draw) the Divine aid from heaven and human love back from the grave. The Sacerdotalist forgets the truth that, not by the help of

* This latter marvel is vouched for by Leo Grammaticus in *vita Basilii Imp.*, § 20. It was obviously accomplished by phantasmagoria and a magic lantern. See, for a most valuable explanation of a multitude of such wonders, Eusebe Salverte's *Sciences Occultes*.

ecclesiastical machinery, but by spiritual worship, must the Father of Spirits be approached; and the Spiritualist forgets that not by his machinery of raps and alphabets, but indeed "spiritually," must "spiritual things" (such as immortality), be discerned. It was well said of late by a profound thinker, that "if our belief in a future life could be verified by the senses, Heaven would cease to be a part of our religion, and become a branch of our geography." "Spiritualism" is indeed a singular misnomer, or, rather, it is a case of *lucus a non lucendo*, for there is no "spirituality" in the system at all. It is materialism, pure and simple, applied to a spiritual truth.

No one who entertains natural reverence and awe for the dead can contemplate the practices of spiritualists in their *séances* without pain and indignation, and only the example of unfeeling mediums and excited friends can have prompted many tender natures to sanction or endure them. In the midnight silence and stillness of our chambers, or in some calm evening solitude of hills and woods, it might be possible to bear the overwhelming emotions of awe; the rush of unspeakable tenderness, which must come upon us with the genuine conviction that the one who was "soul of our soul" has actually returned from the grave, and is near us once more, conveying to us (as his presence even in silence would surely do) the ineffable sense of love triumphant over death; and ready to receive from us the passionate assurances of never-forgotten regret and affection. Such a meeting of the spirits of the dead and the living would be among all life's solemn and affecting incidents the most profound and touching; the one which would move us to the very foundations of our being, and leave us evermore other men than we had been. Nay, we may further conceive that, bending over the dying, and speaking to them of the world into which they are about to enter, and where it is at least not impossible they may meet our long lost friend or parent, we might with faltering lips charge them to bear for us to the dead the message of unchanged fidelity. Such as these are forms of communion with the departed which involve no shock to our reverence, no sin against the holiness of buried affection. But what shall we say for the travesty and mockery thereof which goes on at every spiritualistic *séance*, amid the circumstances with which we are all too well acquainted; and as an alternate evening diversion to music, cards, or tea? In a drawing-room with gas raised or extinguished a score of times to suit the requirements of the medium, amid a circle of pleasantly excited ladies and gentlemen dabbling with alphabets, and slates, and *planchettes*, and ready to catch up every straw of "evidence" to be published or gossiped about on the morrow; in such a scene as this, and with the aid of a *psychagogue*, who can scarcely pronounce three common-place sentences without betraying his ignorance or his vulgarity,* we are told that wives ask to com-

* Charles Sumner has just been brought back from the grave, and proves to have very quickly acquired that disregard of adverbs which is common among the weaker

municate with their dead husbands ; parents are made to "feel" a lost child in their arms ; and sons listen to words professedly spoken to them by their mother's souls. We do not need to be told that the communications thus made are utterly unworthy of the majesty of death, and are patently calculated rather to convince and entertain the audience by verifiable allusions to names and places, than to convey what—if it were truly the departed soul which had returned—would inevitably be the heart-wrung utterances of supreme love. Strange is it indeed that persons not otherwise devoid of tender and reverent feeling, when caught by the passion for this sorcery, permit themselves and the company they may happen to join ; to find the entertainment of an evening in practice so revolting. Shall we give to it the name which it deserves, and say that the act of evoking the dead in such a manner, and for such a purpose, is *sacrilege* ?

We have spoken of the objects and method of spiritualistic inquiry. Its results even more emphatically exonerate any man of sound and reverent mind from engaging in the task of its investigation. Dr. Wallace asks us to "look rather at the results produced by the evidence, than to the evidence itself," and we are thankful to accept his challenge. Never, we venture to say, may the principle of judging a tree by its fruits be more fairly applied. The grand and obvious result of Spiritualism is to afford us one more (real or fictitious) revelation of the state of departed souls, added to those which we possessed before. Let us consider it a little carefully, and observe what it really reveals.

The pictures of a future world which men have drawn in different lands and ages, all possess at least one claim to our interest. They afford us not indeed the faintest outlines of that Undiscovered Country beyond the bourne of death, but they reveal with unimpeachable, because unintentional sincerity, the innermost desires and fears of living men. On that "cloud" which receives every departing soul out of our sight, the magic-lantern of fancy casts its bright or gloomy imagery, and we need but watch the phantasms as they pass to know the hidden slides of the brain which produced them. The luscious gardens and Houris anticipated by the Moslem ; the eternal repose of Nirvana sighed for by the Buddhist ; the alternate warfare and wassail of Walhalla, for which the Norseman longed as the climax of glory and felicity, convey to us at a glance a livelier conception of the sensuality, the indolence, and the fierceness, of the respective races than could be acquired by elaborate studies of their manners and morality. In a similar way other characteristics are revealed by the terrors of Future Punishment,—which the lively Greek imagined to himself as the endless hopeless labours of an Ixion or a Sisyphus ; the dignified Egyptian, as degradation to a bestial form ; and the grim-souled Teuton of the Dark Ages, as eternal torture in a fiery

brethren in America—and also, perhaps, among American mediums. He is reported to have said, "Oh, my friends, that you would ponder well that sacred injunction from spirit life, 'Lay up treasures in Heaven. You need not be told how to do this, you must act *unselfish*.'"

cave. Whatever has constituted man's highest pleasure on earth, *that* he has hoped to find again in heaven, and whatever he has most dreaded, *that* he has imagined as forming the retribution of guilt hereafter. From this point of view the Christian idea of a serene empyrean, wherein saints and archangels for ever cast their crowns before the great White Throne, and worship the thrice Holy One who sitteth thereon—affords singular evidence of the spiritual altitude to which those souls had attained to whom such an Apocalypse opened the supremest vision of beatitude. The attitude of Adoration—of sublime ecstatic rapture in the presence of perfect Holiness and Goodness, is assuredly the loftiest of which we have any conception, and to desire to enjoy and prolong it for ever can only genuinely pertain to a soul in which the love of Divine goodness is already the ruling passion. Wider thought and calmer reflection may teach that not alone on such mountain peaks of emotion, but on the plains of sacred service, should the faithful son of God desire to spend his immortality. But the modern American poet who has taken on himself to sneer at the notion of angels “loafing about the Throne,” has given curious evidence of his incompetence to understand what sublime passion it was which inspired that wondrous vision of Patmos.

Accepting then the Heaven and Hell of each creed as a natural test of the characteristic sentiments of its disciples, we turn somewhat inquisitively to discover what sort of a future existence the new faith of Spiritualism proposes to give us. Of course it affords every facility for such an inquiry; for, while other religions teach primarily concerning God, and secondly, and with much more reserve, about the life after death; Spiritualism teaches first, and at great length, about the future life, and frankly confesses that it has no light to throw on the problems of theology. What then, we ask, has Spiritualism told us respecting the state of the dead, or rather (as a sceptic must inwardly pose the question)—What do its narratives betray concerning the ideals of existence which Spiritualists have created out of the depth of their own consciousness? Do they prove an advance upon those of earlier creeds; or, on the contrary, do they mark a singular and deplorable retrogression towards the materialistic, the carnal, and the vulgar? Of course such an enquiry would be met at the outset by a Spiritualist with the vehement assertion that it was not he who devised what the spirits say of themselves, but the spirits who have lifted the veil of their own existence, for whose ignoble details he is in no way responsible. As, however, every Pagan and Buddhist, Mahometan and Parsee would say as much on his own behalf, and maintain that Elysium and Nirvana, Paradise and Gorotman, had each been revealed by such “mediums” as Orpheus and Buddha, Mahomet and Zoroaster, we must be content to pass by this argument and treat the phase of immortality discovered (or invented) by Mr. Hume and his friends, as no less significant of the moral ideals of Spiritualists and the general level of their aspirations.

Let it be granted cordially that there is nothing in the spiritualistic

Hades akin to the "Hell of the Red Hot Iron," the "Hell of the Little Child," the "Hell of the Burning Bonnet," and the "Hell of the Boiling Kettle" set forth with such ghastly circumstantiality in these latter days in Dr. Furness' *Books for the Young*, and in older times by numberless Calvinistic and Catholic divines. Theodore Parker went, indeed, so far as to say that "there was, at all events, one good service which the Spiritualists had done, *they had knocked the bottom out of Hell.*" Considering that the peculiarity of that terrible Pit has been generally understood to be that it is "bottomless," the achievement would seem rather difficult; but in any case we may candidly agree that on this side no exception need be taken against the spiritualist doctrine, save that perchance it fails to afford indication of any sense of how profound must be the mental anguish through which it is possible for a soul, stained with vice and cruelty, to recover its purity and peace. Spiritualist remorse seems almost as colourless as spiritualist beatitude is vulgar and inane.

On the other hand, when we ask to be informed (beyond the testimony of sweet smiles and assurances of felicity), of the nature of the happiness of virtuous departed souls, we are confronted with narratives much more nearly realizing our notion of humiliating penance and helplessness than of glory and freedom; of Purgatory rather than of Paradise. The dead, it seems, according to Spiritualism, have not (even after vast intervals of time) advanced one step nearer to the knowledge of those diviner truths for which the soul of man hungers, than they possessed while on earth. The Hope of Immortality is bound up, in religious minds, with the faith that though no actual vision can ever be vouchsafed of the all-pervading Spirit, yet that some sense beyond any which earthly life affords, of the presence and love of the Father will come to the soul when it has gone "home to God," and that Doubt will surely be left behind among the cerements of the grave. But Spiritualists cheerfully tell us such hopes are quite as delusive as those of the material crowns and harps of the New Jerusalem. "Nothing," says Dr. Wallace, "is more common than for religious people at *séances* to ask questions about God and Christ. In reply they never get more than opinions, or more frequently the statement that they, the spirits, have no more actual knowledge than they had on earth" (p. 805.) There are indeed, Dr. Wallace assures us, Catholic and Protestant, Mahomedan and Hindoo spirits, proving that the "mind with its myriad beliefs is not suddenly changed at death," nor, seemingly, for ages afterwards. Thus from our estimate of the Spiritualist state of future felicity, we are called on to make, at starting, the enormous deduction of everything resembling religious progress. The Spiritualist is perfectly content with an ideal Heaven wherein he will remain in just as much doubt or error as he happens to have entertained upon earth.

Further, as regards his personal and social affections, Does he at least image to himself that he will be nearer and more able to protect and bless his dear ones after death? Or that he will pass freely hither

and thither, doing service like a guardian angel to mankind, strengthening the weak, comforting the mourner, and awakening the conscience of the wicked? There is (so far as we have followed the literature of Spiritualism) no warrant for such a picture of beneficent activity. Good spirits, as well as bad—the souls of Plato and Fénelon, as well as those of the silliest and wickedest “twaddler” (as Dr. Wallace honestly describes many spirits *habitués* of *séances*)—have seemingly spent all the centuries since their demise humbly waiting to be called up by some, woman, or child precisely, as if they were lackeys ready to answer the downstairs’ bell. In many cases we are led to infer that the dead have been striving for years and ages to make themselves known, and now for the last quarter of a century have very clumsily and imperfectly succeeded in doing so. Let us conceive for a moment a grand and loving soul—a Shakespeare, or Jeremy Taylor, or Shelley, who once spoke to mankind in free and noble speech, a man among men, fumbling about the legs of tables, scratching like a dog at a door, and eagerly flying to obtain the services of an interpreter like Miss Fox, Mr. Hume, or Mrs. Guppy,—and we have surely invented a punishment and humiliation exceeding those of any purgatory hitherto invented. If Virtue itself has nothing better to hope for hereafter than such a destiny, we may well wish that the grave should prove indeed, after all, the last home of “earth’s mighty nation.”

Where Oblivion’s pall shall darkly fall
On the dreamless sleep of annihilation.

In conclusion, Is it too much now to ask that we may be exonerated, once for all, from the charge of unreasonable prejudice, if we refuse to undertake the laborious inquiry into the marvels of Spiritualism which its advocates challenge,—an inquiry pursued by methods bordering upon the sacrilegious, and terminating, either in the exposure of a miserable delusion, or else in the stultification and abortion of man’s immortal Hope?

Fib-tsze.

WE hold in our hand a volume printed on thin yellow-brown paper, almost exactly the same size and thickness as a monthly number of the *Cornhill Magazine*. Though equal in bulk, its weight is hardly one-half that of the magazine; and so thin is the paper, that the foreign book, although printed only on one side of the sheet, contains about seventy pages more than the English one. The writing runs from top to bottom of the page, as is shown by the dividing lines between the columns. Neither the arrow-headed inscriptions of Ninevite marbles, nor the hieroglyphics of Egyptian papyri, present such an intricate puzzling appearance to the uninitiated eye as do these complicated characters; and yet they are more familiar to our English vision than any other oriental writing; indeed, we may venture to say, than any other foreign language whatever. For there can hardly be man, woman, or child in the British isles, certainly there can be none among the four millions of London, who have not frequently gazed at this strange character where it stares them in the face in every grocer's window upon the sides of tea chests. Owing to its extreme dissimilarity to all other forms of writing, possibly the majority of these gazers never imagine that what they see is intelligible written language, but take it to be grotesque ornamentation, congruous to the willow-pattern plate style of beauty. Yet these queer-looking pages, with their endlessly diversified combinations of crosses and squares, straight lines and flourishes, curves and dots, picture forth to the instructed eye the thoughts and feelings of a heart that ceased to beat thousands of years ago, and a brain long since decomposed to join the dust of a land ten thousand miles away, and that with no less precision than the columns of the morning's *Times*, still damp from the press, reflect the ideas which passed through the editor's mind last night. If thought be but a mode of matter in motion, our brain has been just now agitated by vibrations first set in movement about two thousand three hundred years ago within the skull of a black-haired, yellow-skinned Mongolian, who pondered the mysteries of existence while he cultivated his rice-field, somewhere not far from where the impetuous Hoang-ho turns its turbid rush from a southerly direction eastward. It is curious to review the strange and various media along which the vibrations must have passed from his brain to ours. In his age pen, ink, and paper were yet unknown. Either he himself, or more probably his disciples after him, painfully scratched with a knife's point rude figures on the smooth surface of slips of split bamboo, to record the memories of thoughts they would not willingly let die. As the

centuries rolled on, woven silk was substituted for the wood, and a brush of hair took the place of the graving-tool. Later still this costly material yielded to coarse paper made from the inner bark of trees, ends of hemp, or old fishing nets, and by and bye of the fibre of the very bamboo plant which had afforded the earliest writing-tablets. Centuries before Gutenberg, Faust, and Caxton, this book of tea-chest symbols was once more graven on wood, but now cut in relief on a block of pear-tree wood, from which copies were printed off with ink made of lamp-black and gum. Multiplied by the press, the book held a more secure tenure of existence, though in a country where book-worms and white ants rapidly devour neglected libraries, new editions must have been frequently issued to preserve the work for posterity. Originally the outcome of a human mind, thinking and teaching amid poverty and obscurity, its author could hardly have expected it to be remembered beyond the third or fourth generation, yet here it is, after more than two millenniums, a standard book among millions of reading men in Eastern Asia; and at present it is putting in motion the brain-cells of a red-haired stranger on the banks of the Thames, and perhaps, by means of these pages, may awaken some interesting and not altogether valueless trains of thought in the minds of English readers.

The catalogue of the imperial library of China, commenced by the erudite Lew Heang, and completed by his son Lew Hin about the commencement of the Christian era, enumerated and described upwards of eleven thousand sections* by more than six hundred authors. Three thousand of these contained the classics and their commentators. The remainder were classified under the heads of philosophy, poetry, the military art, mathematical science, and medicine. Of this respectable amount of literature by far the larger portion perished ages ago; the imperial library itself, with nearly its whole contents, being reduced to ashes during an insurrection in the generation succeeding the completion of the catalogue. But this library of the two Lew was only a collection of the scattered and charred fragments of a much larger antecedent literature; a restoration by means of new copies of half-legible tablets disinterred from their hiding-places in gardens, or dug out of old walls, in dilapidated houses. Midway between Leih-tsze's time and the labours of the Lew family, occurred the infamous attempt of that Chinese Vandal, Shih Hwang Te, the first Emperor of China, to annihilate all literature, with slight exceptions, that existed in his dominions, that is, throughout what was to him and his people the whole civilized world. Leih-tsze lived in the feudal age of China, when the area drained by the Yellow River, was divided into a hundred petty kingdoms, dukedoms, and baronies, nominally owning allegiance to one Suzerain, but practically independent. Two centuries after his death, a Chinese Alexander the Great issued from the extreme

* The meaning of *peen*, translated "section," is uncertain. Originally a slip of bamboo, it came to mean a chapter of a book, or a book. Probably it stands for section, or chapter, in the catalogue above referred to, as the authors hardly could have written eighteen or nineteen works apiece.

west of that Eastern *orbis terrarum*, and welded all these states into one great despotic empire. Inflated by an insane pride which could not brook comparison with the mythic glories of the semi-fabulous hero-kings of antiquity, and irritated by the conservatism of the literati, who were to him what the French Legitimists were to Napoleon the First, he resolved to commit to the flames every memorial of the past, in order that the history of humanity might begin with his reign. The attempt failed. Literature was too widely spread, and the love of literature too deeply ingrained in the hearts of the people, for the efforts of a tyrant to exterminate it, even though the monster went to the length of burying alive four hundred and sixty learned men who resisted his decrees. But only those books which possessed the largest amount of inherent vitality could sustain so severe an assault. Among these was this work of Leih-tsze. This suggests to us a remark of some importance. Shih Hwang Te's very objectionable form of bibliomania was happily as exceptional in Chinese history as Khalif Omar's consignment of the library of the Ptolemies to heat the bath fires of Alexandria was in Western history. But apart from any special and extraordinary attacks upon literature, every generation saw multitudes of books perish in China, either through neglect, or in the catastrophes of fire, war, or civil commotion. That this particular book should have survived from the fourth century B.C. to the age of printing, of itself marks it out as worthy of attention. The preface of the earliest extant commentator, Chang Sham, who edited Leih-tsze in the fourth century A.D., gives an interesting glimpse at the process of natural selection which was always going on, preserving a few favoured volumes from the oblivion into which numbers of other works continually lapsed. Chang Sham tells us, "I have heard my father say that his father married a Miss Wong, one of three sisters. Mr. Wong belonged to an old literary family which had a passion for book-collecting, and had become possessed of a vast library. The other Misses Wong also married scholars, and the three young men vied with each other in transcribing rare books. When there ensued a time of confusion in the reign of the Emperor Wai (A.D. 310), he and one of his brothers-in-law fled southward, each one putting as many books as he could into his baggage-waggon. The road, however, was long, and frequent attacks of robbers diminished their load greatly; so he said to the other, 'We cannot save all the books, let us select the rarer ones to preserve them from extinction.' Among those which he himself chose for preservation were the writings of Leih-tsze."

The continued existence of an author through two thousand years of literary vicissitudes, the earlier millennium of which was especially fatal to literature, may not, perhaps, prove its superior fitness to survive, according to our estimate of fitness. But it indicates that the book was congenial to the tastes, and interested the minds, of its preservers. We have met with the complaint on the part of English readers of Chinese translations, that "they contain nothing new." It would be strange, indeed, if Chinese poetry, philosophy, or religion, should contain any ideas abso-

lately new to those who have inherited the wealth of Sanscrit and Semitic, of Greek and Roman literatures, with all their offspring of later date. The value of a work like this is not in the novelty of its contents, but in the light it throws upon the development of the human mind among a people entirely uninfluenced by our Western progress. We should find great light would be thrown upon many interesting but difficult questions in psychology if we could discriminate always between original and imitative thought. Much which seems to us the purely spontaneous operation of our minds is, no doubt, unconscious reproduction of what has been first put into them from outside. If, however, we could enter into communication with the inhabitants, supposing there to be such, of Venus, Jupiter, and other planets, and upon comparison of the respective conditions and developments of mind in each we should find that the same dominant ideas and principles had manifested and established themselves in other planets as in our own, our conviction that these ideas and principles are not the artificial product of restless, baseless speculation, but the natural and necessary effect of the interaction between mind and the universe in which it works, would be greatly strengthened. The mutual comparison which is impossible for us with those star-dwelling neighbours of ours, we can obtain upon the surface of our own globe, whenever impassable mountain-ranges, and vast breadths of stormy ocean, have isolated any portion of mankind for a time sufficiently long to permit the independent evolution of thought, and its being recorded in literature. Whenever the time comes that science marks out our globe into distinct areas of independent mental evolution, China will occupy a prominent place, making one great division by itself, and affording in its ancient, vast, unbroken stream of literature the richest materials for comparison with the rest of the world. In this article we aim at nothing more than to give the reader a glimpse into the thoughts of an ancient thinker, some might say, dreamer rather, belonging to a long obsolete school of Chinese philosophy.

Conclusive proof of the mental isolation, and, therefore, independence of those old Chinese thinkers is derived from the extant literature itself. This does not militate against the theory that the black-haired race, which has almost obliterated the traces of earlier peoples in Eastern Asia, originally immigrated into the country, probably in successive waves separated by hundreds of years, from some part of Western Asia, taking its long pilgrimage across the sterile plateau of Thibet, and following the course of the Yellow River, until it founded its first permanent settlements on its banks about seven hundred miles from the sea. These immigrants may have brought with them the rudiments of writing, as they doubtless did bring many oral traditions, and habits of thought already formed, or in formation, before they bade a long farewell to the streams of humanity which tended south and west. Something, therefore, we must allow them as their original stock of mental furniture when they came into the land, at an unknown distant date, two, three, or more thousands of years

B.C. That which was strongest and most durable of this primitive floating stock of thought was crystallised in their most ancient books, called the Classics. We can see in these earliest national records that already, when they were first inscribed on the bamboo tablets, all memory of derivation from the West had died out of the minds of the people; and if a portion of their contents came into China from beyond the Western mountains, the earliest scribes had not the faintest sense of the fact. All Chinese literature after this, for about a thousand years, is beyond suspicion purely Chinese. Take our author for example; the whole known world to him extended only about three hundred miles east and west, and about half that distance north and south. All beyond this region was wrapt in Cimmerian darkness. On every hand a fringe of savage tribes surrounded the very limited area of civilisation, through which not the faintest rumour of what existed to the north and south had penetrated, while the ocean to the east was but dimly known by vague report, and the great mountain region to the west was the chosen abode of genii, deified men, and celestial spirits. Confucius, Laou-tsze, Leih-tsze, Yang-Choo, and all other leaders of thought in China for some centuries were either original thinkers, or were indebted to their own national literature only, not a trace of outside influence being discernible in their writings.

Leih-tsze is for us the name of a book rather than of a man. Unlike the great national hero Confucius, whose disciples Boswellized before Boswell, Leih-tsze's personality has left so faint an impression on his literary remains, that he has been taken by some Chinese critics for an imaginary personage. This incredulity we may comfortably waive aside on the high authority of the imperial catalogue of the reigning dynasty, which discusses the question temperately and fairly, and decides that there are no good grounds for doubting that there did live a man by name Leih Yu-kow, [or, as literature quotes him, Leih-tsze, the philosopher Leih, whose teachings were compiled into a book by his disciples, in the form in which we now have it, barring some errors and interpolations which have crept into the text. Beyond the bare fact of his existence in the kingdom of Ch'ing, nearly central among the feudal states, about four hundred years before the Christian era, we have only the most meagre information about him. Though a light of the age, a pupil of distinguished rabbis, and himself the revered master of a band of attached disciples, he was neglected by Government, and lived in obscurity and poverty. Once, indeed, he came into contact with the ruling powers, as the following anecdote shows:—"So poor was Leih-tsze, that he bore the traces of hunger in his emaciated frame. A travelling scholar drew the attention of the Prince of Ch'ing to this, saying, 'In your territory one of the leading teachers of the age lives in extreme poverty; is it because you, O prince, do not love learned men?' The prince immediately sent an officer to carry relief to Leih-tsze. Leih-tsze came out to receive the messenger, and with a double obeisance declined the gift. When he went inside again, his wife taunted him with the reproach, 'I was told

that a philosopher's wife and children were sure to be well off. Here we are all starving, and when the ruler sends us relief, you refuse it. This, no doubt, is an instance of the fate you are always preaching!' (Leih-tsze taught necessity and pooh-poohed free will. So his angry spouse seemed to have him on the hip.) But he quietly rejoined, 'The prince only sent his help in consequence of another man's report; he has no personal knowledge of me. Another day he will be listening to some one else's report, and finding me a criminal, that is why I declined the gift.'" These philosophers were a proud, at least self-respecting, set, counting it shame to be pensioners on royal bounty, unless royalty respectfully received their admonitions. The narrative intimates that, in this case, Leih-tsze's independence of spirit saved his life during a revolution which succeeded.

We have a peep at the man inside the philosopher's cloak in this next incident. "Leih-tsze started for Tsai, went half-way, and returned. A friend asked, 'Why have you come back?' 'I was afraid,' he replied. 'What made you afraid?' 'On the road I stopped to get a meal at the sign of "The Ten Syrups," and they presented me with a grand dinner.' 'What was there in this to frighten you?' 'Truly it made me very uncomfortable. I thought that if my personal appearance won me such reverence from a poor innkeeper, how much more would it make an impression upon a monarch of ten thousand chariots, who would surely employ me in Government, and ascribe merit to me. On this account I was afraid.' 'Excellent,' replied his mentor, 'I see you know how to conduct yourself. You will come to honour.'" The popularity from which the philosopher shrank, nevertheless, found him out and besieged him in the form of a numerous band of disciples, who showed their respect by taking off their shoes before entering his door. This, again, we are told, is an illustration of destiny. Leih-tsze was to be famous, and he became so, even against his will.

Though a few passing allusions give us all that we can glean of the personal individuality of Leih-tsze, this book, supplemented by other contemporary records, affords a very vivid picture of the state of society in which he moved. We are apt to think that times so far anterior to our own must still have retained lingering traces of primeval arcadian simplicity of thought and manners. But we are introduced by these pages to a highly artificial state of civilization, which felt itself removed by immense spaces of time from the youth of the world. Kings and nobles feasted in their halls, rode out in four-horse chariots to the chase or the battle; minstrels, jugglers, mechanics crowded to their courts for employment and reward. Ladies sighed in the harems, or plotted with eunuchs to secure the advancement of their own children in place of the legitimate heir. Travelling statesmen and philosophers wandered from court to court with the latest recipe for establishing universal peace, and bringing mankind under one sway. Below them all was the great mass of the people engaged in trade, handicrafts, and the cultivation of the soil, but liable to be called upon for military service, and frequently

suffering the calamities of war. In this highly complex condition of society there were a few men who, instead of taking existence as they found it, laboured to discover its secret, or to amend its conditions. Some of these, by the fame of their learning or their wisdom, attracted disciples around them, and thus established informal schools, where the instruction was chiefly oral and by example, and in which keen debate upon the principles of philosophy and ethics was frequent. Among such self-constituted teachers Leih-tsze held a distinguished place, and to the admiration of his disciples we owe this record of his doctrines from which we will now present some specimens.

Mr. G. H. Lewes, after reviewing the history of philosophy from Thales to Kant and Hegel, considers that he has abundantly proved the barrenness of all metaphysics and the impossibility of ontology. These conclusions we do not venture to dispute. His numerous examples from Ancient Greece and Modern Europe might be paralleled by a third department in which the metaphysics of China should be exhibited, and India, of course, would add a crowded fourth. This agreement in prosecuting inquiries so inevitably barren seems to indicate an innate tendency in the human mind to ask these questions, unanswerable though they be. Granted that it is utterly impossible for man ever to extricate himself from the great stream of phenomena of which he is himself part, and to survey from the lofty altitude of absolute perception the realities of being, which here he knows only in its relations, will he ever learn to be contented in his necessary ignorance? A few thousands of generations more may perhaps evolve a human race which shall be incapable of curiosity about these profoundest speculations; and the man of the future, having thoroughly acquiesced in the hereditary conviction that truth is but the order of ideas corresponding to the order of phenomena, may have ceased even to scorn metaphysics as equivalent to inquiring about lunar politics, because the very memory that once such contemplations possessed irresistible fascination for the human mind shall have been long lost. If so, the future will be very unlike the past and the present, and for ourselves we acknowledge that the vista of human progress thus opening out before us does not seem attractive. Leih-tsze, however, lived in a metaphysical age, and in the very foreground of his philosophy we find abstruse speculations upon the nature of being in itself. A bare translation into English without explanatory notes would hardly be intelligible, but we may select a few sentences to show the style. "That which brings forth all things is not born; that which changes things is itself changeless. Spontaneously it lives, changes, takes form and colour, knows, is strong, decays and dies. Yet if you say that it lives and changes, has shape and hue, possesses knowledge and strength, is subject to decay and death, you err." Again: "There are living things and a cause of life; there is form, and a cause of form; there is sound and a cause of sound; there is colour and a cause of colour; there is flavour and a cause of flavour. That which life produces

is death, but the cause of life never comes to an end. That which form produces is substance, but the cause of form is immaterial. That which sound produces is hearing, but the cause of sound is ever inaudible. That which colour produces is beauty, but the cause of colour is ever invisible. All these are functions of the Absolute.* It can be male and female, yielding and rigid, short and long, square and round, living and dead, hot and cold, sweet and bitter, stinking and fragrant. It is without knowledge and without power, and it is omniscient and omnipotent." All this seems the childish babbling of a philosophy which has not grown up to manhood, and entered into possession of a polysyllabic terminology for its ideas; yet its meaning is equivalent to Herbert Spencer's fundamental proposition "the origin of all things is inscrutable." It recognises the existence of that "something" which is above, and behind, and in, all phenomena; which no acuteness of observation can reach, no profundity of meditation can fathom, but which we know is there. In this direction the latest researches of modern science and the crude reflections of our Chinese philosopher both come to a dead stop at exactly the same point.

How crude and fanciful the metaphysical speculations of Leih-tsze were is apparent in the following imaginary dialogue:—"King T'ang asked Hea-Kih, 'Was there originally a time when nothing material existed?' Hea-Kih replied, 'If originally there was nothing, whence have existing things come from? Will it be reasonable if some day posterity should ask whether anything existed at this time?' The King continued, 'Then is there really no succession of events?' Hea-Kih said, 'The succession of things is infinite. Beginnings may be endings, and endings may be beginnings. Who can discriminate them? But as to that which exists beyond all phenomena, and before all events, I am ignorant.' 'Then is the universe without limit?' asked the monarch. 'I know not,' Hea-Kih replied; but when pressed for an answer, added: 'The non-existent is infinite. Existence is finite. How do I know this? It is involved in the idea of the infinite. The infinite cannot have a greater infinite to bound it. But as to what limits the finite, I confess my ignorance.' T'ang asked, 'What is the nature of being beyond the limits of our world?' 'Just like it is in the middle kingdom,' was the answer. 'How know you that?' 'Because,' he replied, 'I have travelled east and west to the limits of civilisation, and everywhere I found things the same. At the extreme points of my wanderings I inquired of the people, and they assured me that they knew of nothing different beyond them. Thus I conclude that the whole universe is alike.'"

If disposed to smile at the superficiality of these reasonings, yet one must remember that whether we sound a bottomless ocean with a deep-sea line or a pole, the result is the same; in each case we fail to reach

* We must make apology to the sinologue for the audacity of this translation of *moo wei* by the Absolute. Yet does it not approach nearer to the idea of the Chinese than any other English expression?

the bottom. Our Chinese used the longest line he had, and could do no more, nor can we.

Leih-tsze's philosophy of life was fatalism, yet fatalism of a peculiar shade. He belonged to the school originated by the famous contemporary of Confucius, Laou-tsze, the watchword of which was *taou*, "the path." Confucius, too, believed in "the path," but his path was the path of duty, the way of righteousness, following the higher instincts of our moral nature.

"What Heaven has conferred is called *the nature*; an accordance with this nature is called *the path*; the regulation of this path is called *instruction*." It is much more difficult to grasp Laou-tsze's and Leih-tsze's meaning when they speak of "the path"; but this difference between the rival schools is clear. Confucius fixed his mind exclusively on the ethical side of human nature, while his opponents included in their idea of "the path" not only the totality of human nature, but the totality of the universe. One student of Taoism explains *taou* as the "ultimate ideal unity of the universe." (It is simpler to take "the path" for what we express by "the course of nature," only extending nature beyond physical things to embrace gods and men, mind and matter, heaven and earth, and all their contents in one universal stream of being, all pervaded by one uniting principle it is true, but that principle inscrutable to us, and inseparable from the stream of existence itself. This infinite march of events moves on of itself in its own irresistible current; it is folly to struggle against it, wisdom to resign ourselves to be borne along by the stream whithersoever it tends. "The Emperor Shun asked Ching: 'Can I attain to the possession of "the path"?''" (*Taou* here stands for the inner secret of being, the reality behind appearances, and perhaps might be rendered by "the truth.") "Ching replies to him: 'Your body is not your own, how can you acquire and possess *taou*?' Shun said, 'If my body is not my own, whose is it?' 'It is a form entrusted to you by Heaven and Earth,' was the answer. 'Life is not yours. It is a harmony entrusted to you by Heaven and Earth. Your nature is not yours, it is a concord entrusted to you by Heaven and Earth. Your children and grandchildren are not yours. They are new forms entrusted to you by Heaven and Earth. When you move, you do not know whither you are going; when you are at rest, you know not what you are grasping. The very food you eat is made by Heaven and Earth to nourish you, you know not how. Why should you talk of attaining to the possession of anything?'"

In the sixth chapter we have an amusing discussion between fate and free-will personified. What we call free-will is represented by Mr. Effort, who challenged Mr. Fate thus: "How can you compare your merits with mine?" Fate retorted: "What are these merits of yours which you wish to compare with me?" Effort replied: "Long life and early death, failure and success, honour and obscurity, riches and poverty, all depend upon me." Fate said: "Pang-tso was not wiser than the sages Yau and Shun, yet he lived to be eight hundred years old. Ngan Uen's

talents were not mediocre, yet he died at thirty-two. Confucius' virtue was not inferior to that of the princes of his day, yet he wandered about in poverty. The tyrant Chow's morality was not better than that of the three sages, yet he enjoyed the royal seat. If these things are your work, Mr. Effort, why do you confer long life, riches, and honours upon the bad, and accumulate misfortune on the good?" Effort replied: "According to what you say, I have no merits at all. But that things happen so contrary is your arrangement, not mine." Fate answered: "Since you say Fate does these things, why talk about their being *arranged* so? Crooked and straight are all the same to me. All things are what they are of themselves. How can I know anything about it?"

The sentimentalism of Xerxes weeping at his grand review would have met with small sympathy from a Taoist, as the following anecdote, told by Leih-tsze, shows:—"The King of Tsai, returning from a journey, came in sight of his capital from the northern hills and burst into tears, saying, 'Beautiful, beautiful, is my royal city! So stately and spacious, yet I must leave it and die! If I were to live for ever, I should never wish to quit this place and go elsewhere.' His courtiers wept with him, saying, 'Our food and clothing, our chariots and horses, are poor compared with yours. Yet we, too, are unwilling to die, how much more reason have you to dislike the prospect!' One among them, however, only smiled. The king, observing this, ceased to weep, and demanded of him why he alone smiled when all the others sympathised with their master's grief? The philosopher replied: 'If virtuous rulers never left their thrones, T'ae Kung and Hwan Kung would be always reigning. If valiant men never died, Chong Kung and Ling Kung would constantly occupy the royal seat. If these monarchs had not vacated the throne, you, my prince, would to-day be clad in mats and tilling the ground. You owe your occupancy of the throne to the mutations of life and death.'" This same doctrine of fatalism rudely jostles against an Englishman's conceptions of providence in our next illustration. Listen to this:—"Mr. Tien made a great feast in his hall, and sat down among a thousand guests to the banquet. While the waiters were bringing in fish and wild geese, Mr. Tien heaved a sigh and said, 'How generous is Heaven to man! For our use the corn grows; for us the waters yield fish, and birds fly in the air.' The guests re-echoed these sentiments; until a boy of twelve years old stepped forth and said, 'Not so, my lord. All things in heaven and earth live by the same right as ourselves. The large prey upon the small; the strong and intelligent eat the stupid and weak. It is not that they are made for each other. Man takes what is eatable and eats it. Why should you think that Heaven produced things for man's sake? Mosquitoes bite man's skin, and tigers devour his flesh. Did Heaven produce men for the mosquitoes and tigers?'"

Fate rules all; or, since there can be no such conscious intelligence in fate as the word "rules" suggests, all things are by fate. But this conviction does not interfere with human activity. A considerable part of

Leih-tsze's teaching is devoted to illustrate the power of mind over matter. Laying hold of such facts as the immense superiority in feats of skill, driving four-in-hand, swimming, rowing, archery, and music, and handicrafts, which is attained by unremitting practice, concentrated attention, utter fearlessness, and freedom from self-consciousness, our author seems to push them to the extreme of believing that man may possibly attain, by a still higher degree of abstraction, to an omnipotent command over material forces. Many of his tales, which have the appearance of extravagant credulity, may perhaps be intended to convey an allegorical meaning. We read of men who could ride upon the wind, walk through fire, over water, and even through solid rocks as through empty space. These marvellous stories, perhaps, only clothe in fables the philosopher's conviction of the power of wisdom and virtue to render the soul independent of the shocks and changes of external circumstances. These mystical utterances, however, lack the clue needed for their interpretation, and we are never sure whether Leih-tsze is credulous himself, or playing upon human credulity, or veiling some subtle meaning under his marvellous narratives. A few of these tales occupy a border-land between fact and fiction. Here is one which embodies a notion common enough among ourselves, that there is a wonderful power in faith, apart altogether from the reality of what is believed. "Tsze Wa was a favourite with the Prince of Tsun. Those whom he patronised were ennobled; those whom he spoke against were degraded. Two guests of his on a journey passed the night at a farm-house. The old farmer, by name Yau Hoi, overheard them conversing about the power of life and death, riches and poverty, possessed by Tsze Wa. The farmer, who was grievously poor, drank in all their words, and on the morrow went into the city and found his way to Tsze Wa's door. Tsze Wa's disciples were all men of good birth, used to dress in silk and ride in carriages, to walk with a stately step, and look about them with a lofty air. When they saw Yau Hoi, a weak old man with a dirty face and untidy clothes, come into the school, they despised him, and amused themselves by making game of him and pushing him about. Yau Hoi exhibited no sign of anger. Presently Tsze Wa led them up to the top of a lofty tower, and cried out, 'I'll give a hundred pieces of silver to any one who will throw himself down.' All of them eagerly responded, and Yau Hoi thinking they were sincere, determined to be first, and threw himself over. He claved the air like a bird, and alighted upon the ground without a broken bone. Tsze Wa thought he had escaped by chance. So he again pointed to a deep pool in the river and said, 'Down there is a precious pearl: dive and you will get it.' Yau Hoi again complied; dived into the flood, and when he came up, he had really got a pearl. The spectators then began to suspect something extraordinary; and Tsze Wa ordered that food and clothing should be prepared to present to him. Suddenly a great fire was discovered in Tsze Wa's treasury. Tsze Wa exclaimed, 'If any one dare venture in, he shall have whatever treasure he rescues as his reward.' Yau Hoi entered calmly, and came out again

unsoiled and unhurt. Then every one thought he possessed a magic charm. They crowded round to do him reverence, apologising for their former rudeness, and begging for his secret. Yau Hoi said, 'I have no secret. I myself do not know how it was done; but I will try to recount it to you. Last night Tsze Wa's guests lodged at my house, and I overheard them praising Tsze Wa's power of life and death, riches and poverty, and I perfectly believed it. When I came here, I took all your words to be true, and only feared lest I should not perfectly trust them and act them out. I was unconscious of my bodily frame, and knew no fear. Now that I know you have deceived me, I tremble, and wonder at what I have gone through. I consider myself lucky that I was not burnt or drowned. Now I shake with fear, and I shall never dare to approach fire or water again.' From this time forward, if Tsze Wa's pupils met a beggar or a horse-dealer on the road, they did not dare to be rude to him, but stopped and bowed." This represents the power of faith as inherent in itself. There is another view of faith which regards its efficacy as not in itself, but in its appeal to a higher Power. Leih-tsze was no theist, and he was so careless of the national objects of worship that they are hardly alluded to in his pages. Yet he gives us a story which will convey to many minds a meaning far beyond his own. "A stupid countryman, ninety years of age, had his dwelling on the northern slope of a lofty mountain-range, two hundred miles long and ten thousand cubits high. One day he was struck with the thought that a road to the south was eminently desirable, so he called his family together and proposed to level the precipices, and make a road through to the southern waters. His wife remonstrated, hinting that the old man's strength would not suffice to demolish a hillock, let alone those great mountains. But the old man was not daunted, and leading on his son and grandson, the three of them began to pick and dig, and to carry away the stones and earth in baskets, and an old widow sent her child of seven years old to help them. Winter and summer they toiled away, and after a whole year seemed to be where they began. A shrewd old grey-beard mocked their slow progress; but the stupid countryman replied with a sigh, 'Your heart is not so intelligent as that of this widow's feeble child. Although I am old, and shall die, I have a son, and he has a son; these will have children and grandchildren. My posterity will go on multiplying without end, and the mountain will not grow bigger. What is to prevent our levelling it?,' The old man had nothing to say, but the spirit which presides over snakes heard what was said, and fearing that the work would not stop, reported the matter to God. God was affected by their sincerity, and commanded two genii to remove the mountains, shifting one to the east, and another to the south, so as to open a pass to the river Han."

In that last reference to God, Leih-tsze does but for a moment borrow the language of the ancient creed which he usually lost sight of in his speculations. On the subject of immortality he seems to have speculated much, and at times to have indulged some faint hope of existence beyond

the range of present vision. "Once on a journey he sat down with a group of his disciples to take a meal by the road-side. One of the company saw a skull, bleached with age, half hidden by the grass; he pulled the long grass aside and pointed to it. Leih-tsze said to his disciple Pak-fung, 'Only he and I know, and are independent of life and death.' " But his utterances on this are indistinct, and rather point to an absorption into an infinite substance than continued conscious individuality. "The living, according to nature, must end. The pure spirit-essence is Heaven's part, the bodily framework is Earth's part. When the spirit-essence leaves the form, both return to their true state. From birth to death man has four great changes, childhood, youth, old age, and death. In childhood his physical nature is simple, and his will is not divided, which is the perfection of harmony. External things cannot injure him, and his virtue is complete. In manhood his passions change like the wind and overflow like a flood. His desires and anxieties arise in abundance. External things fight against him, therefore his virtue declines. In old age his desires and anxieties become feeble, and his body is near its rest. External things do not occupy the first place. Although it does not reach the completeness of childhood, it is superior to middle age. In death he attains to rest, and returns to its extreme limit." The Taoist philosophers are never tired of aiming a blow at Confucianism, and thus the great sage is made to figure sometimes in ridiculous situations. In the next extracts there is probably a covert attack on the melancholy which overshadowed the life of Confucius, and wrapt his end in gloom. "Confucius roaming about the Tai mountain, saw Wing K'ai Ki walking in the fields, dressed in a deer-hide, with a bit of rope for his girdle, striking his guitar and singing. He asked him, 'Sir, what makes you so joyful?' K'ai Ki replied, 'I have many reasons for joy. Of all things Heaven has made, human beings are most noble, and I have been made a human being; that is one reason for joy. Men are more honourable than women, and I was made a man; this is a second cause for joy. Some men are born and die before they are out of the nurse's arms, but I have gone along for ninety years; that is a third cause for joy. Scholars are always poor, and death is the end of man. Why should I regret being as others and coming to my end?' Confucius exclaimed, 'Capital! you know how to be magnanimous.'" Another of these refreshingly contented spirits meets us in the following:—"Lam Lü, when a hundred years old, was gleaning in his patrimonial fields, clad only in a sheep-skin, and he sang as he went along. Confucius saw him from a distance, and said to his disciples, 'That old man is worth speaking to, go and question him.' Tsze Kung requested leave to go. Encountering him on a hillock, he looked him in the face, sighed, and said, 'Sir, have you not yet any regrets that you go on singing as you glean?' Lam Lü neither stopped walking nor singing. Tsze Kung kept on asking, until he looked up, and replied, 'What should I regret?' Tsze Kung said, 'In youth you failed in diligence, in manhood you did not struggle with the times,

now you are old you have neither wife nor child; death's appointed day is near; what occasions for joy can you have that you should sing as you glean?' Lam Lü smiled and said, 'All men share in my causes for joy; but they, on the contrary, take them for sorrows; because when I was young I did not work hard, and in my manhood I did not struggle with the times, therefore I have attained to this green old age. Now I am old, because I have neither wife nor child, and death's appointed day is near, therefore I rejoice like this.' Tsze Kung replied, 'It is natural to man to love long life and to dislike death; how is it that you take death to be a cause for joy?' Lam Lü said, 'Death and life are but a going forth and a returning, therefore when I die here, how do I know that I shall not live there? And how do I know that planning and craving for life is not a mistake? Also, how know I that for me to die now is not better than all my previous life?' Tsze Kung heard, but did not understand what he meant; so he went back and told the Master. The Master said, 'I knew he was worth speaking to, and so it has proved. But though he has got hold of the thing, he has not got to the bottom of it.' "

Live without care, die without fear; such was our author's philosophy of life. When we compare his ethical teaching with that of his great predecessor Laou-tsze, five or six generations before, we are struck with the marked degeneracy of his moral tone. In his *Taou Teh King*, the founder of the Taoist sect, despite his sphinx-like style, impresses us with a sense of his profound moral earnestness. Though Laou-tsze dissented altogether from the Confucian system, nevertheless we see in him an eager yearning for perfection, a pensive sadness in the contemplation of human follies and crimes, a positive inculcation of personal virtue, which draw out our hearts towards "the old philosopher." Confucius was the stern practical reformer like Calvin, whom we rather admire than love; while Laou-tsze possesses the attractive power of the mystic Tauler. It would be utterly unjust to attribute to the founder of Taoism the moral aberrations of his successors, even though we can detect in his teachings the germ of the subsequent evil development. For if we can detect it, he could not, and we cannot doubt that his devotion to virtue was as sincere as his conception of it was beautiful. If called upon to express the guiding principle of his moral teachings by one word, we shall not be exalting it above its intrinsic merits by choosing that noblest of words, self-abnegation. Not that he in the dim light of heathenism could see all that that word now implies to us in the clear light of our Christianity. The passive side of self-abnegation was more evident to him than the active. But amid the confused noises of a distracted world, the shock of battles, the intrigues of courts, the restless contentions for honour and advancement of the officials and scholars, the fierce pursuit of wealth by the merchants and artisans, Laou-tsze distinctly heard a still small voice, summoning him, and through him mankind, to the calm serenity of a life freed from selfish desires, devoid of covetousness, envy, and ambi-

tion, strong in acknowledged weakness, and victorious over pride and violence by the might of meekness and humility. To him the type of perfect goodness was water; "water which is good to benefit all things, while it does not strive, but runs to the place which all men disdain." The defects of his conception are manifest to us, though while yet untested by experience he may well have failed to perceive them. He disliked political reformers, because in them self-exaltation mingled with their desire to reform the world. He disliked preachers of morality, because their labours were an indication of, in a sense, the result of, the loss of morality. He disliked an artificial state of society, because it abounded in temptations to pride, covetousness, and deceit. This antagonism to effort, led him into the extreme of depreciating even effort for self-improvement. He appeared to entertain a vague hope that if men would only let themselves alone, strive for nothing, not even for goodness, the great *Taou*, that ineffable, inexplicable something, too mysterious to have even a name, would itself flow through the channels of the human heart, and bear the life along in the right direction. With all this exaggeration of his favourite precept "do nothing," his own personal attachment to virtue was sincere and supreme; and doubtless, while he continued to influence his own philosophy, this loyalty to virtue endured among his followers.

Leih-tsze lived near two centuries later, and in his teachings the earnest moral purpose of Taoism has given place to a licentious indifference. Here and there, indeed, we come across some lingering echoes of the traditional admiration for meekness and humility, but for the most part the philosopher is so lost in contemplation of the mystery of existence that he has not a spare thought left for these particular phenomena, virtue and vice. He is much more interested in the question whether man may not, by the power of abstract contemplation, penetrate into the secret of existence, and gain a superhuman control over natural forces. He still holds theoretically that the riches, power, and fame of the world are all delusive appearances, and that to be free from appetites, and passions, and self-assertion, is "the path;" but he has ceased to entertain the slightest hope that out of this doctrine will ever come a moral renovation of the world. Indeed, he suspects now that the distinctions of virtue and vice are themselves but delusive imaginations, as much as the pomps and vanities of life which his leader eschewed. One can hardly read the following specimens of his teaching without a shudder of disgust:—"Tsze Ch'an * became Prime Minister of Ch'ing, and had sole authority in the Government. Within three years he brought the whole kingdom into a state of order. The good gladly submitted to his sway, and the bad obeyed his laws from fear. But his own brothers, Ch'iu and Muk, were addicted to vicious pleasures; Ch'iu loved wine, and Muk loved women. A thousand jars of wine stood in Ch'iu's cellar, and heaps of grain in his barns. When one passed his door at the distance of a hundred paces, the smell of distillation filled the nostrils. In his drink-

* A disciple of Confucius, and one of his personal attendants.

ing bouts Ch'iu forgot politics and morals, riches and poverty, friends and relatives, care of life and fear of death. Although the house were on fire, or swords clashing in his very face, he would know nothing about it. In Muk's harem were scores of concubines, selected for their youth and beauty; and at times he would shut himself in the inner apartments for three months together, not at home to his nearest relative or dearest friend. His emissaries haunted the whole country-side in search for lovely maidens, whom gold might tempt to enter his harem. Tsze Ch'an grieved over his brothers' ill-conduct night and day, and at last secretly consulted Tang Sik about it. 'I have heard,' said he, 'that a man must first of all regulate himself, next his family, and then the kingdom, proceeding from the near to the distant. Now I have brought the kingdom under government, but my own family is disorderly; this is contrary to "the path." Tell me, I pray you, how I may save my brothers.' Tang Sik replied, 'I have been wondering at it for a long time, but was afraid to speak about it. Why, sir, do you not find some opportunity of instructing them in the importance of following one's (moral) nature, and according with (Heaven's) decree, and also of alluring them by setting before them the high esteem which attends upon the practice of propriety and righteousness?'

"Tsze Ch'an took Tang Sik's advice, and went to visit his brothers; and began his instructions by saying, 'Man's superiority to the brutes consists in intelligence and forethought. Intelligence and forethought produce the rules of propriety and righteousness. Propriety and righteousness lead to fame and office. If you act upon the incentives of your passions, and abandon yourselves to wine and lust, you imperil your own lives. Listen to a brother's words, and if you repent in the morning, before night you shall receive a government appointment.' Ch'iu and Muk replied, 'Long ago we attained to knowledge, and made our choice; do you suppose we waited for you to come and teach us before we could understand? Life is not easy to get, but death comes of itself. Who would think of wasting a life so hard to get, by spending it in watching for a death which comes so easily? And as to caring for proprieties and righteousness, in order that we may brag over others, and doing violence to our own natures, in order to win an empty name, in our view this would be worse than death itself. All we wish is to exhaust the joys of life, and seize the pleasure of the present moment. Our only grief is that our physical capacity for pleasure is so small, we have no leisure to sorrow over loss of reputation or danger to life. If you are so puffed up by your political success, as to think of leading our minds astray by the seductions of glory and official salary, we think it mean of you and pitiable. Now we will tell you the difference. External government, however clever, is not certain of success, and inflicts suffering upon people. Internal government never leads to disorder, and men joyfully conform to nature. Your external government barely gets a temporary success in one small kingdom, and after all does not accord with the hearts of the people. Our

internal government may be applied to the whole world, and then kings and statesmen will have no more to do. We have long been wishing to teach you our doctrine, and do you on the contrary bring your doctrine to teach us !' Tsze Ch'an was dumfounded, and departed without a word. Next day he reported the interview to Tang Sik. Tang Sik said, 'You, sir, have been living with perfect sages, and you did not know it. Who will say that you are wise? The good order of the kingdom is an accidental circumstance, not to be imputed as merit to you.'"

This licentious creed was the deliberate choice of Taoism ; though of course Taoists used to the full our grand human liberty of inconsistency, and by no means carried out their principle either to its full logical or practical consequences. Still it remains a fact, that for a space, if only a brief space, philosophy in China rejected morality, and exalted licentiousness to the dignity of a religion. As a natural result Taoism rapidly degenerated, and at the same time lost its hold upon the people. In their lifetime Laou-tsze held his banner of spontaneity bravely aloft, and Confucius waged a desperate but hardly equal strife under the standard of rigid self-discipline, the two teachers were in their hearts fighting on the same side, to reclaim a lost world to truth and virtue. But while the Confucianists remained staunch to this double object of pursuit, truth and virtue, the Taoists thought they perceived an inconsistency between them, and chose truth rather than virtue. The complete victory of Confucianism along the whole line is a fact worthy of our consideration. Confucius was the prophet of conscience, not only grasping tenaciously the truth of the moral supremacy of conscience, but believing most devoutly in its divine origin, and his own divine mission to defend its rights, and also that there could not be salvation for humanity except in obedience to its behests. In his lifetime he fought an Ishmaelitic conflict, a guerilla warfare for his sacred faith. Every man's hand seemed against him, and it was as much as he could do to live with his principles, though the life of a wanderer from one city to another, from one kingdom to another people. After his death his disciples fought for his truth like soldiers combating desperately over the corpse of their dead leader, and still for generations the battle seemed to hang in the balance. But at last the victory was achieved, and it was final and glorious. Conscience proved its own supremacy, by putting these doctrines of natural licence to disgraceful rout. Now, and for these thousand years and more, that bewildering attempt of Leih-tsze's to confuse the distinctions between right and wrong has seemed as strange and unnatural to the Chinese mind as it seems to our own. The sect continued, but as a small minority of the nation, a minority given over to idolatry, superstitious arts, magic, alchemy, the philosopher's stone, and the elixir of life. But the name of Taou has never lost its potency in China, and for centuries it has been united with Confucianism and Buddhism as a member of the trinity of philosophies. At the parting of the ways, where the doctrine of nature and spontaneous life diverged from the doctrine of virtue and stern self-

discipline, the nation bade farewell to the dreamy mysticism of Laou-tsze, to follow the banner of Confucius and conscience. Yet a memory of the sweetness and serenity of those earlier musings lingered long in the national mind, preserving the ancient doctors of Taou from oblivion and their writings from contempt. They appealed to our nature on one side, and they had glimpses of one side of truth also, and although we rejoice in the clear victory of the teacher of righteousness and benevolence, as a notable instance of the survival of the fittest in the mutual struggle for life of the philosophies, we acknowledge that the far-off echoes of ancient Taou sound a note, an under-tone of which can be detected in many quarters, even in our modern Christian England.

There is a vein of humour in Leih-tsze which enlivens with a genial light some of his shrewd observations of human nature; and though he fails to smite at vice with the trenchant blade of moral faith, he manifests a visionary longing for a happier state in which vice is not. With a few extracts illustrative of these traits, we will close this notice of him.

"In the state of Ki there was a man who was anxious lest heaven and earth should fall to pieces and he have no place to lodge his body in. He could neither eat nor sleep from anxiety. And there was another who was anxious about his distress and went to enlighten him. 'The heaven gathers air,' he said, 'and there is no place which is not full of air: sun, moon, and stars are only collected air which contains light; even if they could fall they would do no harm.' His pupil said, 'Suppose the earth should break, what then?' 'The Earth,' replied his mentor, 'is an accumulation of clods, packed close together on all sides. You may go about the whole day treading and trampling on the earth without any fear of its breaking.' His hearer rejoiced like a released prisoner, and the teacher rejoiced in sympathy with him. But Chang Lo heard it and said with a smile: 'Rainbows and clouds, wind and rain, sky and mountains, seas and rivers, metals and stones, fire and wood, are all but forms of matter in combination. Who says they will not be destroyed? A little thing like man in the midst of the vast universe may think it indestructible, and to trouble ourselves about such a remote contingency is needless. But heaven and earth will inevitably be destroyed, and if you encountered that time, how could you help being anxious?' Leih-tsze heard and smiled, saying: 'It is equally erroneous to say that the universe will be destroyed, and to say that it will not be destroyed. We are unable to determine it either way. Life does not know death, and death does not know life. Why should I trouble my mind about the permanency of the universe?'"

"Yang Choo was travelling through Sung, and came to an inn. The inn-keeper had two wives, one of whom was pretty and the other was ugly. He esteemed the ugly one and slighted the pretty one. Yang Choo asked the reason. The inn-keeper replied: 'That pretty one thinks herself pretty, but I do not perceive her beauty. The ugly one thinks herself ugly, but I do not perceive her lack of comeliness.' Yang Choo said to

his disciples : ' Remember this ; if you act virtuously without attributing the merit of it to yourself, where will you go without being loved ? ' "

" When the great Yu was regulating the waters, one day he lost his way, and wandered into a country on the northern shore of the North Sea, he knew not how many times ten thousand miles from China. In that land was neither wind nor rain, frost nor dew, nor did he meet with any kinds of animal or vegetable life. On all sides the ground was perfectly smooth, only gently rising in elevation in the centre. A vase-shaped mountain rose in the middle of that country, with a circular orifice on the summit, from which a fountain issued, called the spiritual fountain. Its fragrance was sweeter than rose-gardens or cinnamon groves, and its taste was more exquisite than that of the finest wine. From one source it divided into four channels and flowed down the mountain, meandering through the whole land and watering every corner of it. The climate was serene, perfectly free from malaria. The people who lived there were of a gentle disposition and in harmony with their external circumstances. No strife nor violence marred their peace. Their hearts were tender and their frames were soft. They were innocent of pride and envy. Old and young dwelt together, and they had neither prince nor official among them. Men and women wandered about in company, and they employed no match-makers, sent no marriage presents. They dwelt on the banks of the stream, and needed not to plough and sow. The climate was so genial that they did not weave nor wear clothes. They lived to be a hundred years old ; premature death and disease being unknown among them. The population was always increasing, till it was innumerable ; and enjoyed perpetual felicity, ignorant of decay, old age, grief and hardship. Delighting in music, the voices joining harmoniously in song, ceased not throughout the day. If hungry or weary they drank of the spiritual fountain and their strength and spirits were restored to their normal condition. Too deep a draught intoxicated, and then they slept for a week without waking. When they bathed in the spiritual fountain their skin became glossy and the fragrance exhaled for a week. When King Muh of Chau entered that kingdom he tarried there for three years without a thought of home. On his return to his royal palace he was plunged in profound melancholy, refused food and wine, and all the delights of his harem, and several months passed before he recovered."

" A man in the East, while on a journey, was reduced by starvation, and lay dying by the road-side. A celebrated highwayman passed that way, and, pitying him, dismounted, and put a bottle to his lips. After three sucks the dying man revived, and opened his eyes. Seeing his deliverer bending over him, he inquired his name, and being told, exclaimed, ' Are not you the famous robber ? What induced you to give me drink ? I am an honest man, and cannot receive food from you.' Thereupon he beat the ground with his arms and tried to vomit, gasped and gurgled in his throat, fell back, and expired. But if the man was a robber, his drink had not committed theft. How strangely men confuse

things." This is a satire upon certain well-known anecdotes of Confucian worthies, whose unbending scrupulousness appeared ridiculous to our Taoist believer in non-resistance to the universal life-stream of nature.

"A neighbour of Yang Choo lost a sheep, and calling upon the villagers to go in search of it, he asked the assistance of Yang Choo's servant also. Yang Choo inquired why so many persons were needed to seek for a single sheep. His neighbour said, 'Because the roads and by-paths are many.' When they returned, he asked if the sheep had been found. 'No, it is lost,' they answered. 'How lost?' he demanded. 'The bypaths branch out into other bypaths, and we could not possibly tell which way it had gone, so we returned.' A shade of sadness fell upon Yang Choo's countenance; for a long time he did not speak, and he did not smile again that day. His disciples marvelled, and requested an explanation. 'The sheep was not a valuable animal, and it did not belong to you; why should it cloud over your happiness like this?' Yang Choo returned no answer. Discussing it among themselves, one of them said, 'The great path divides into many by-paths, and many sheep are lost therein. How is it that you sit in the master's school, and have not yet learned to interpret the master's meaning?'"

"Yang Choo's younger brother went out for a walk in a suit of white silk, but rain coming on, he borrowed a black cloak to return in. When he reached the door, his dog came out and barked at him. The young man was provoked, and raised his hand to strike the dog. Yang Choo said, 'Do not beat him; you are no better yourself. Suppose your dog went out white, and came back black, would it not startle you?'"

"One new year's day, the people of Ham Tan presented a number of pigeons to their lord. He was very pleased, and liberally rewarded them. A guest of his inquired the reason. 'This is new year's day,' he said, 'and I shall set them all at liberty to fly back to the woods, and so express the good-will of my heart to all living things.' His guest replied, 'The people are aware of your intention to release the birds, and therefore they entrap and catch them, and many are killed in their attempts. If you wish to keep them alive, the better way would be to prohibit catching them.'"

"A man who had lost his axe, suspected his neighbour's son. He watched him, and said to himself, 'He is the thief; he has the gait of a thief, the face of a thief, the voice of a thief; everything in his appearance and behaviour says as plainly as possible that he has stolen the axe.' But happening one day to find the axe in his own garden, when he next met his neighbour's son, there was nothing whatever in his looks or behaviour which could lead one to suspect him to be a thief."

"Confucius, on a journey, saw two children disputing, and asked the reason. One of the lads said, 'I say that the rising sun is near us, and at noon it is far off.' The other said, 'No, the sun is far off at dawn, but

near at mid-day.' The first said, 'Why, when the sun rises it is as large as a chariot-wheel, but in the middle of the day it is no larger than a plate; is it not small when at a distance, and large when it is near?' The other said, 'When the sun first rises, its rays are mild and genial; but at noon it is blazing hot. Surely it is hotter when near, and cooler when afar.' Confucius could not decide the point. The two children smiled and said, 'Who will say that you know much?'

The English reader may be disposed to think that in this respect there is not much to choose between Confucius and Leih-tsze and all the rest of China's boasted sages. They lived before the Baconian philosophy; and a clever boy from one of our primary schools could instruct them in the exact sciences. But unless, in the progress of human evolution, man develops into a being very different from what he always has been, the subject-matter of Taoistic speculation will continue to possess intensest interest and unrivalled practical importance for mankind. Our meditations upon the *whence* and the *whither* may fail to lead to those definite and clear conclusions which science craves, but they exert a momentous influence upon the formation of a practical rule of life. One does not need to go far in modern literature in order to detect an order of thought which is strictly parallel to that naturalistic philosophy of which *Leih-tsze* is a representative. Those old Chinese thinkers were but following a tendency in human nature, which exists in us still; and it can do us no harm to learn whither it led them, and what it ended in. Happily we have a sure confidence that, as nobler instincts and loftier aspirations prevailed in the far East, leaving this indolent epicurean philosophy to lose itself in the ignominious quagmire of absurd and degrading superstition, so the philosophy of conscience and duty, of effort and conflict, will prevail, and must prevail in the long run, however for a time men may seem to lose heart and long for the land of the lotseaters.

F. S. T.

Ballad.



WHY is it so with me, false Love,
 Why is it so with me?
 Mine enemies might thus have dealt;
 I fear'd it not of thee.

Thou wast the thought of all my thoughts,
 Nor other hope had I:
 My life was laid upon thy love;
 Then how could'st let me die?

The flower is loyal to the bud,
 The greenwood to the spring,
 The soldier to his banner bright,
 The noble to his king:

The bee is constant to the hive,
 The ringdove to the tree,
 The martin to the cottage-eaves;
 Thou only not to me.

Yet if again, false Love, thy feet
 To tread the pathway burn
 That once they trod so well and oft,
 Return, false Love, return;

And stand beside thy maiden's bier,
 And thou wilt surely see,
 That I have been as true to love
 As thou wert false to me.

F. T. PALGRAVE.

The Real Prosper Mérimée.

SOME time has gone by since M. Michel Lévy issued, under the auspices of M. Taine, a posthumous work which threw unusual light on the career and peculiar temperament of one of the most remarkable personalities of this century. In France, wearied by intestine and foreign warfare, the sickened mind of the intellectual public has, for three long years, given unmistakeable tokens of transient sterility; the living appear momentarily incapable of healthy productions. Authors themselves are full of the national cares, political fever swamps that moral repose which is needed for meditation, and readers are fain to be content with the literary treasures of the past, whence a recent influx of posthumous works, of more or less interest, in the shape of private correspondences. The Parisians have had before them letters of Lamartine, letters of Sainte Beuve, and of others, all of which afforded a valuable insight into the real character of their writers. None, however, deserved more study than those of the late Prosper Mérimée, and critics of both countries have paid a deserving homage to these confidences of a complex genius. The *Revue des Deux Mondes* and the *Quarterly Review* have in turns given exhaustive treatments of the subject. Nor should we venture on re-opening a field of speculation that has called forth such universal notice, but that, in our own opinion, there is further room for interesting remarks, mainly owing to the scope within which the reviewers of the *Lettres à une Inconnue* have seen fit to remain. Far from us be the presumptuous thought of analysing better what others have analysed so ably; our meaning is that the work has been considered rather in regard to its intrinsic merits as a literary production than used as it ought to be, namely, as a key to a curious psychological study. Some have deprecated the laxity of morals the writer betrays in more than one instance; others have taken *seriatim* divers remarks on men and things, apparently forgetting that many hidden thoughts that have crossed the minds of most men are consigned to intimate correspondence—thoughts the author would have been loth to affirm in public; and, to the best of our knowledge, none have allotted to Mérimée the place to which he has a right. Our purpose would be to repair this omission. The readers of Mérimée's critics may still ask in vain: "Who was he? A vulgar sceptic, or a typical incarnation of a time; a man of genius, or a distinguished *lettré*? What was his influence on his contemporaries, and how will posterity estimate him? And how is it that Mérimée attained celebrity of a peculiar kind which far surpasses that of geniuses superior

to his?" Perhaps the following observations may be useful towards a satisfactory answer.

It was not without reason that the author of the *Life of Jesus* recently described Prosper Mérimée as the Petronius of his epoch. He was not merely an eminent man of letters of the ordinary calibre, a novelist, a *savant*; he was something more, a type of the modern race of Frenchmen, a man whose adamant nature was the receptacle of all doubts and disbeliefs. Together with these two illustrious sceptics, Sainte Beuve and Stendhal, he made up a trio which might well have passed for the treble incarnation of haughty and resigned despair. Sainte Beuve possessed a store of amiability which daubed his scepticism with a pleasant glaze of varnish. Stendhal was, like all those who have scrutinised the vices of human nature with a magnifying glass, of a dark and desponding mood, corrected by considerable tenderness of heart; but he, Prosper Mérimée, stood an image of perfection in character, a strong, invulnerable sceptic, whose acquired toughness was proof alike against love and hatred—a human Mephistopheles, not of the capacity of Goethe's, but rather like the evil spirit such as he has been personified by a famous singer—polished, refined, elegant; stabbing with daggers of the finest steel and richest work, darting a murderous epigram in the choicest language, working the same havoc as the bitter spirit of German creation, but killing, tearing, and wounding with the exquisite politeness of a perfect gentleman. Having so far guarded himself against the invasion of banality and shown the teeth to most men, he tried his hand at everything, attained perfection in most things, threw them up in disgust after becoming their master, and one day awoke one of the most forlorn of human creatures. And still Prosper Mérimée was not born what he was hereafter. Such sentiments as he possessed and prided on do not issue from the cradle. A man gifted with the choicest faculties, as Mérimée, must have the embryo of high qualities of heart; and if his judge will take the trouble to follow the incidents of the first years of his life, he will soon find singular instances in support of this. More than any other, a youthful creature owing to an unusual degree the faculty of observation should be attended to by his educators, for, if we judge by the present instance, the slightest lesson wrongly given and erroneously understood will turn a precocious child into a dire path of thought. M. Taine tells us, in his interesting preface, that when he was nine years old Mérimée was scolded by his parents for some trifling breach of manners, and dismissed from the drawing-room in an agony of shame. While still in tears at the door, he heard his friends laughing and saying: "Poor child! he thinks we are very angry." Even at that tender age he was revolted at the idea of being made a fool of and deceived, and henceforth he pledged himself to repress his sensibility, to be constantly on guard against enthusiasm and effusion, and to speak and write as if in the presence of a harsh and bitter hearer.

To this petty occurrence, which would have left but little impression

on other children, may, on Mérimée's own admission, be traced the origin of the programme he set to himself to fight his way through life. Hence he studied a part, and applied his rich gifts of intellect to a manufacture of an artificial self. He curbed his passions, tastes, and desires under a strong hand; he had a sensitive heart; he repressed his sensitiveness so that it did not seem to exist; later on the artificial process got the better of him, and it was really suppressed altogether. His disposition naturally tended to affection; this he concealed in the same way—not that he was yet irreclaimable, but, to quote Taine's happy metaphor, certain race-horses are so well bred by their masters that when they are in hand they dare not indulge in the slightest gambol. So that he entered the lists clad in an inward cuirass which the contact of society was to harden more and more, and bent on regarding the world much as one contemplates a forest full of murderous robbers. He looked about him, and bitterly disposed as he was he applied himself more to the observation of what is contemptible in human nature than to an appreciation of its nobler sides. His remarks justified preconceived ideas, and from the first, as he said himself, quoting Hamlet, man pleased him not, nor woman neither. Let us say, however, that his contempt for his fellow creatures came not from a personal and disparaging comparison with himself, for his letters to the unknown lady in whom he confided show that the shortcomings he despised in others he equally derided in himself. One of his subjects of ironical commentary was that throughout his life he was credited for qualities not his own, while he was blamed for defects which he had not. With such thoughts there was nothing surprising that he should adopt as a first fundamental maxim the paradox that speech is given to man to conceal his yearnings, and, as a second principle, Talleyrand's recommendation to guard oneself against generous movements because they are usually the best.

A natural consequence of this moral perversion was that he affected, in the process of writing, theories of a totally different cast from those of others. First of all he examined with a critical eye the manner then predominant among the finest writers France has produced in this age. The Romantic renovation was in full efflorescence; Mérimée set at work over dishes of the same taste. A story is told of an original who stopped to look at one of the hottest street fights of the Revolution of July 1830; a National guard was obstinately firing on the Royal Suisses without the slightest effect, and the stranger was looking on in apparent disgust. Presently he walked up to the unsuccessful marksman, took the rifle from his hands, and volunteered to show how the work should be done; he fired and one of the Suisses fell dead. As he attempted to return the rifle to its owner, and as the other urged him to keep the weapon he could use so well, the stranger gravely replied: "No, thank you; I am a royalist; it isn't my opinion." Likewise Prosper Mérimée joined the Romantiques; he wrote Spanish sword and cloak comedies, which he gave as translations from the text of an unknown genius, thereby mystifying the public and

proving that it was in his power to affect the tone and style of the new school as successfully as the best, although "it was not his opinion." He tried the trick once more with the same felicitous result in *La Guzla*. And then he gave up romanticism, and took to writing according to his own ideas, after contemptuously observing that such masterpieces as he had achieved only demanded the knowledge of a word or two of a foreign language, a sketch-book of a foreign country, and a tolerable style. Nothing could be more withering for himself and others.

Prosper Mérimée seems throughout his existence to have been filled with that restlessness which according to Mr. Forster affected Charles Dickens, although his studious care was to conceal any sign of such a disposition, and to appear a man of marble. He did certainly devote enormous study to French literature, and especially to contemporaneous productions, but marvellously keen at detecting the strings which set the machine in motion, ever intent on scanning the details, he ignored their real beauty of *ensemble*, lost sight of the pregnant sides of a work, and soon wearied of the best. It had been the same with Art; a painter of no little ability, he had become convinced of the sterility of the brush, because the purely mechanical side of art had no secret for him. It was the same reason which induced him to sift the delicacies of six languages, and ransack their literature: occasionally he brought forth a gem and set it in French, adding the perfection of his style to some pregnant novelette of Ivan Tourguenef's; but eventually he wearied of polyglotism too, and deeming nothing among the living worthy of notice, he turned his eyes to the past, and turned the final leaf of his literary existence, that of a man who could never apply his talent to the services of a definite idea, who had every natural element to be happy and illustrious, and who failed in being the one and but just attained the other. Mérimée henceforward wasted priceless faculties in artistic attempts which could only be entitled to the place of curiosities of literature. He doted on imparting life to things of the past; he liked to transfer himself, like Théophile Gautier, into the midst of dead civilisations, constructing an admirable story on the sight of an inscription, a ruin, using his acuteness of observation in the framing of types to people the archaic visions he indulged in. He even went so far as to observe his surroundings merely with the purpose of guessing by means of induction the gait and ideas of their predecessors. In this ungrateful labour he has shown well enough what he was capable of doing if he had applied himself to the serious analysis of contemporary characters. Without possessing the intensity of observation of a Balzac, his intellectual condition might have entitled him to a place but just below this great master. And it is strange and painful to follow him as he sedulously narrows his own scope in art.

All the reasons we have adduced above fatally drove him into the rankest egotism which was ever the bane of a writer. His historical works no one, not excluding himself probably, took a very great interest in; they are cold and stately—comparable for the matter, if the

metaphor be permitted to us, to water contained in the finest Bohemian glass. As to his essays in fiction it is vastly different. When he has deigned to remain in his own time, and to pick out his personages and action from modern society, his productions have always been admirable both in matter and form. His process was much like Stendhal's. As he wrote for the select (if indeed he ever wrote for the edification of any one) he disdained the imbroglia of commonplace sentiments, the banalities of ordinary conversation; he obviously aimed at concentration and abridgment, at probing the acts of man by certain telling features of human nature, and, in fact, at leaving much for the reader to guess by suppressing what vulgarities are wearisome to the "profound few." This kind of work offers equal dangers and advantages; it excludes two thirds of the general readers who may be wanting in the quick sagacity requisite for the proper comprehension of the author's process, although in the main they may be qualified to appreciate the essence of his work; further, it circumscribes the repute of a writer in a narrow circle, and, moreover, such style always tends to fall into obscurity and enigma. On the other hand, the omission of a great many strictly useless details preserves a work from the caprices of fashion and change of customs, and *Carmen* and *Colomba*, free as they are from descriptions of transient and superficial interest, and consisting solely of the condensed description of passions and impulses that are eternal, will be eternally useful, just as Shakespeare and Milton are. These masterpieces are but few in number, and they serve rather to show what their conceiver might have done than what he has done.

We have now done with Mérimée until we find the new and characteristic *Lettres à une Inconnue*. Their literary merits are of secondary consideration; suffice it to say, in departing from the subject once for all, that their form, wit, and ingenuity are paramount. As to the *Inconnue*, there is no need to inquire after her. What is thoroughly engrossing is the perusal between the lines of the desolate story of unhappiness the great sceptic relates. There are expressions for every disgust, words eloquent in their brevity expressive of deceptions, weariness, *ennui*; bitter estimations of men, impeachments of what he calls human imbecility; contemptuous allusions to his best friends, and topping all a clear disbelief in goodness, and those noble commonplaces, honour, love, chivalry, abnegation. It is worthy of special note that Mérimée is withal open to superstition, several instances of this being manifested in different letters; so strong is the yearning of every one towards a faith, whatever it may be. We have found but one good note* in the two volumes of this

* The passage we allude to has been quoted by the *Quarterly Review* as very cynical. The opinion we hold being somewhat different, the passage should be given: "I went to a ball given by some young men of my acquaintance to which all the *figurantes* of the Opera were invited. These women are mostly stupid; but I have remarked how superior they are in moral delicacy to the men of their class. There is only a single vice which separates them from other women—poverty." The *Quarterly* goes on to remark that a man must be far gone in cynicism to hazard such a

correspondence ; as to the harsh ones, they abound ; on Frenchmen especially his satire never tarries : "The greatest nation in the world is made up of a set of scapegraces, inconsistent, anti-artistic, illogical, bigoted, and not even possessing the religion that comes from the heart." He was a senator of the Empire, not out of any particular liking for a dynasty or a principle, but because, as he said, "tyrants had over Republicans the advantage of washing their hands ;" in his official capacity he was once called upon to make a speech in the Senate, and as it was his first public address he felt rather timorous. "I gained courage," he writes to the *Inconnue*, "when I bethought myself that I was speaking to two hundred fools." On another occasion he relates to the same person how, answering a toast to European Literature at a dinner of the Literary Association, presided over by Lord Palmerston, he gravely spoke nonsense in English for a quarter of an hour, which seemed to be highly appreciated by the so-called learned men who listened. Further on he writes : "You cannot imagine my disgust for our present society ; it seems as if it tried, by its stupid combinations, to augment the mass of annoyances and troubles which are necessary to the order of the world." Speaking of Englishmen, he says that individually they are stupid, but as a whole admirable. Few things, in fact, find grace in his eyes. On marriage, he says that nothing is more repulsive : "The Turks, who bargain for a wife as for a fat sheep, are more honest than we Europeans who daub over this vile transaction with a varnish of hypocrisy but too transparent." It may be seen at this stage how the scepticism of the first days has begot a cynic. He might have sought happiness in union with a lovely and amiable woman (for he was a great favourite with the sex) ; but he discarded marriage and women by principle. Much of this insensibility is revealed in the following lines : "The other day I went out boating on the Seine. There was a quantity of small sailing-boats filled with all kinds of people about the river. Another large one was freighted by a number of women (of those of the bad tone). All these boats had gone to the shore, and from the largest emerged a man about forty years old, who had a drum, and who drummed away for his own amusement. While I was admiring this lubber's musical dispositions, a woman of about twenty-three comes up to him, calls him a monster, says that she followed him from Paris, and that it would fare ill with him unless he admitted her to his party. All this was going on ashore, our own boat being twenty yards away. The man with the drum was drumming away while the woman was remonstrating, and he at last told her with much coolness that he would have nothing of the kind. Upon this, she ran to the boat furthest from the shore and jumped into the water, thereby splashing us abominably. Although she

paradox, and that the "Unknown" must have been singularly destitute in feminine dignity and self-respect could she have endured to be told that she was only separated from such a class of women by poverty. We hope the "Unknown" did endure it and approve of it, for, unless the *Quarterly* has entirely misunderstood Mérimée's meaning, no worse construction could be put on a very sensible remark.

had extinguished my cigar, indignation did not prevent me, nor my friends, from saving her before she had swallowed a glassful. The handsome object of her despair hadn't stirred, and he muttered between his teeth, 'Why take her out if she wanted to drown herself?' . . . The question to which this incident gives rise in my mind is, why are the most indifferent men the most beloved? That is what I should like you to tell me, if you can."

Such was his opinion on feminine love. Believing as he did that a man is no longer cherished from the moment he shows any affection for the woman he distinguishes from others, Mérimée probably deemed that the best way of avoiding misery and pain was not to love at all. Perhaps the unknown might have replied to his query that she used precisely the means alluded to to win her illustrious correspondent's heart; but in any case it may be affirmed that she did not succeed.

II.

It is within the present writer's recollection to have met Prosper Mérimée at one of those Parisian cafés which form the resort of the pith of the literary world. The place was generally well attended by famous men, but it was never more crowded than when Mérimée happened to be there. His brilliancy of conversation, the effective manner in which he poured out the overflowing of his wit, made of him one of the most desirable men of Paris. On this occasion a young sculptor of talent was holding forth on artistic theories, and he came to speak of glory with the fervency of an adept. "*La gloire!*" said Mérimée, with a caustic smile. "Do you then believe in glory, young man?"

This exclamation remained in our memory as the dejected profession of faith of a wasted life. Such, indeed, was Prosper Mérimée's; and it can be safely affirmed that this unfortunate result was provoked by counteraction against nature, and the valuable information afforded by his correspondence goes to support this view. Throughout the emptiness of his life prevails. To sum up, he sifted languages, literatures, and characters; he studied his species in all parts of the globe; and, as a just retribution for spurning all subjects of study after devoting his attention to each, instead of drawing consequences from the synthesis of things, he sickened, and looked about him for something to love or to like. Failing in his endeavours, he led the brilliant and sterile life of a delicate *désœuvré*, and listlessly wandered through the drama of life, obviously without object, and certainly without desire. What was the use for him to apply his energy to some great work; to labour for a definite enterprise? He was a sceptic, and much of a cynic too; his soul was as well closed to narrow egotism as to a noble faith in the perfectibility of human attempts. Vanity he had none; he cared not a whit for glory. If he achieved a few masterpieces it was for his amusement, not for others—he despised others too much for that; and in his sometimes heroic contempt, the

trace he would leave of his passage in this world troubled him but slightly. As most men who look upon the details of life too critically, he had lost sight of the good features of human nature only to give paramount importance to its vices. He commenced life on the defensive : suspicion bred bitterness ; bitterness bred scepticism, scepticism bred the cynic. It is clear that such negative sentiments were not primarily in his heart, and that they derived their origin from mistaken notions. It is also clear that this singular man's heart never thrilled with love, and that a fatal distrust, on which we have commented, deprived him of a solace which might have made of him a far different individual from the polite, caustic, stoically desponding MÉRIMÉE, whom Renan gives as a type of a period. The "Unknown" was merely the recipient of those confidences which every mind has an irrepressible tendency to unfold ; but that alone is no proof of amorous affection. Proud as he was, MÉRIMÉE doubtless selected her as the fittest person to preserve his secrets ; and perhaps another deception might be added to the others, could he know that even this trust has been betrayed. Howbeit, the *Inconnue* was no more than a confidante. She might perchance have been more had she liked ; and her own letters to MÉRIMÉE would show if she is responsible for preventing a very distinguished man from seeing clearly through his mistakes, and reconciling himself with his fellow-creatures.

This, however, is merely speculation, and one should only reason by facts on such delicate ground. What facts we have lead us to point to MÉRIMÉE as the most unhappy of men. In the tumult of court life, amidst the uproar of the gayest society, he was more forlorn than in the solitude of a desert. His heart was dry to the core ; the eventualities of daily existence were to him as the phases of a nightmare, in which he was forced into playing a part although convinced of its vanity. He must, indeed, have longed to cast off the clay as well as his official gear. His death was in unison with the mournfulness of his life : it occurred shortly after the overthrow of the Second Empire. France was going to pieces ; no one thought of a single individual in this whirling tempest, and MÉRIMÉE's demise was not more noticed than a simple soldier's. He expired in the arms of two faithful English friends. Two hours before breathing his last he wrote the note which closes the second volume of his correspondence. He was borne silently to the grave, momentarily forgotten. No doubt he would have approved of this oblivion and indifference.

Houses of the Poor in Towns.

QUESTIONS which take strong hold of the benevolent feelings are often discussed to little purpose, from neglecting in the first instance to divide the subject properly. If points in which it is possible to effect direct improvement are not distinguished from other points in which improvement can only be the work of indirect and often remote agencies, practicable and impracticable proposals have to bear a common discredit. The Housing of the Poor is a question of this kind. Even in the best considered enumerations of the mischiefs incident to the crowded and unwholesome dens in which the poor, whether in town or country, too commonly live there is often much confusion between evils which admit of a precise and assignable remedy, and evils which will only disappear in the train of other evils of which they are really the offspring. Till lately, at all events, the feature in the housing of the poor which has been most generally singled out for attack is overcrowding. All the ills that the poor are heirs to have been set down to this cause; and if the reformer has been unable to resist the conviction that the conditions which generate overcrowding are not within his control, he has been tempted to give the matter up as hopeless. Yet all the time he has simply approached the subject from the wrong side. He has considered not what the houses are which the poor live in, but how many they be that live in them. He has made the mistake from which bodies as eminent as the College of Physicians have not escaped, and assumed that overcrowding is the one crying evil against which war has to be waged. It is the object, in part, of this paper to show how injurious this mistake may be to the classes about whom it is made. The question will chiefly be treated in its relation to the poor who live in towns. Not of course that the poor who live in the country are not quite as badly off, both as regards the quality of their houses and the number of dwellers in them, as the town poor. Before the laws of sanitary science were properly understood, it was a common theory that the peasant in his cottage enjoyed, at all events, the blessings of pure air and water fresh from the spring. That pleasing delusion has been disposed of. We now know that air and water are as likely to be poisoned in the country as in the town, and we know, too, that though the overcrowding of houses in a given area is naturally greater in towns, the overcrowding of human beings within a given house is quite as great in the country. But, except in one important particular which will be pointed out further on, these evils must be traced to different causes, and be treated by different remedies from those which apply to

the case of the town poor. And, great as the need with regard to the country undoubtedly is, it is hardly quite so immediate as it is with regard to towns. In the country the mischief is not being made worse every day by the natural increase of population, and by the effect of what are called street improvements. Nor is the action of the mischief on those subjected to it so continuous in the country as it is in towns. The labourer's work lies, for the most part, in the fields, and the children's playground is in the open air, not in the stifling back-yard of a small town court. If the inmates of the cottage are poisoned by want of drainage and ventilation at night, they breathe fresh air for a part at least of each day. In towns, on the other hand, the room in which the poor spend the day is often that in which they have spent the night; or if they go to work in shops or factories, it is the place, not the atmosphere, that they change. In towns, too, the evil has been growing worse every year until quite lately, and in all but a few it is still growing worse. We sometimes speak as though in London there had been a real change for the better, owing to the efforts made by the various philanthropic societies which have taken the matter in hand. But these efforts have not only made no appreciable impression upon the defective housing they found in existence, they have not even kept down the additions which are constantly being made to it. The annual increase of population in London is about 40,000, and the clearance required to make room for a single new building—the Law Courts—turned 4,000 persons out of their houses. The oldest of the philanthropic societies has been at work for more than a quarter of a century, and all that it and its successors have done in that time is to provide decent houses for 26,000 persons. If this be set against the growth of population in five-and-twenty years, and the repeated clearances made during that time in every direction and for every sort of purpose, it will be seen that in London the work has still to be begun.

Happily it is no longer necessary to prove that so long as the houses of the poor are wanting in all the requisites which go to make life healthy or decent, it is of little avail to attempt to improve their condition in other ways. As the connection between mind and body has been better understood, we have learnt that it would be as reasonable to look for grapes from thorns as to expect sobriety and energy from men who habitually breathe air which, if they were not acclimatized to it, would at once generate low fever. Acclimatization is not a process which can be undergone without paying the penalty; and familiarity with unhealthy surroundings, though it may act as a safeguard against acute disease, must tend to produce a general depression of system which is hostile alike to either bodily or mental activity, and naturally tempts those who suffer from it to seek a momentary stimulus in gin. All this will here be taken for granted. The points to which this article will be confined are the causes to which the evils in question are to be attributed, and the nature of the remedies of which they severally admit.

The causes are mainly two—the unwholesomeness of the houses in which the poor live, and the number of persons who live in them. The first is, as will be shown, the more important; but it will be convenient to clear the ground by beginning with the second. Overcrowding in towns is of two sorts—the overcrowding of single houses by human beings, and the overcrowding of a given area by blocks of houses. The second kind, however, will more properly be spoken of under the head of unwholesomeness, because the way in which it principally acts is by depriving each house of proper ventilation. The overcrowding of single houses, or more accurately of single rooms, has always made a strong though not a fruitful impression on the public imagination. The reason probably is that the mischievous results are of a kind especially easy to realize. People who live in houses where, professedly at all events, sanitary requirements have been properly attended to, may find some difficulty in fancying what it would be to live in houses where these requirements are systematically neglected. But every one has had some experience of what it means to be in an overcrowded room, and can conceive what it would be to have to undress and sleep and dress in such a room without any means of securing privacy even as regards persons of different sex. This is the state of things which the mention of the houses of the poor as things needing improvement usually calls up to the minds of benevolent persons; and certainly nothing can cry more loudly for change than a system under which every report of a Medical Officer of Health in a large town tells of single rooms inhabited by fathers and mothers, by grown-up sons and daughters, and by a young man taken in as a lodger. Under such circumstances as these neither health nor decency can be maintained except by exceptional good fortune. There is not the cubic space, not a fifth part perhaps of the cubic space, which physicians tell us is essential to the one; there is not the separation between the sexes which natural instinct tells us is essential to the other.

But although overcrowding is the evil which most strikes the imagination, it is not the evil which ought to receive most attention. In determining what are the points in the condition of the poor which we will try to mend, the first inquiry should always be, what are the points which most admit of mending? It is better to aim at attainable reforms, even if they leave untouched much that we should like to alter, than to aim at reforms which are unattainable, and by consequence to end in achieving no reform at all. Now, a crusade against overcrowding is in a great measure a crusade against an inevitable incident of the conditions under which the poor live. It is mainly due to the desire to save in rent. Two rooms cost more than one, and unless a poor man is more than ordinarily alive to considerations of health and decency, he will be tempted to make one do. If he once gets accustomed to making one do, it is a chance if he ever learns to enlarge his wants. He portions out his income on the assumption that only so much of it will be wanted for rent, and unless his wages increase faster than his family, he will never be in a position to

pay more rent without a sense of positive sacrifice. This is a cause of overcrowding which no legislation can touch. Supposing that the occupation of private houses were placed under regulations resembling those in force in common lodging-houses, these rules could be of no force without a system of inspection of the most searching and ubiquitous kind. Every house must be registered, the authorities must be furnished with particulars of all of the inmates, and they must be empowered to enter at all times to make sure that none had been omitted from the list or misdescribed as regards sex or age. The mere mention of such a scheme is enough to show its impossibility. The poor must, for the most part, be cured of overcrowding by the tedious and circuitous process of raising their standard of living both as regards health and decency. It is true that in many cases overcrowding exists in combination with the want of sufficient house-room, and so far as this is the case the evil can be dealt with in various ways. But there is good reason to suspect that it would not be removed by the provision of sufficient house-room. Instances are constantly found in which there is great overcrowding in one house while rooms are standing empty in an adjoining house. Those who have taken the management of house property in the hope of making their relation to the inmates a means of leading them to a better way of life speak of the difficulty they have in persuading their tenants to make their lodging keep pace with the growth of their children; and even among a class which is able to pay for better accommodation there is often a considerable indisposition to spend money on this object. To have three rooms instead of two, for example, would in the eyes of many working-men amount to being over-housed. They would think it a waste of money, much as a man with 1,000*l.* a year would think it a waste of money to fit up his house with the latest and most scientific appliances in the way of ventilating apparatus. What to the classes above them are absolute necessities are to them mere luxuries; and until they have learned by observation and comparison to estimate them differently, overcrowding will continue. By degrees, it may be hoped, the improved health and comfort of those who have paid the additional rent which is demanded for better accommodation will become too conspicuous for the lesson to be missed. Actual teaching may do something to hasten the change, and in proportion as working-men come to understand, or to take on faith, the elementary laws of health, they will be more willing to make the money sacrifices which obedience to the laws of health often entails. But for the present men who feel thus will be in a small minority, and so far as legislation is concerned they must remain in a small minority.

It would be wrong, however, to conclude from this that Parliament can do nothing in the matter. It cannot prevent overcrowding, so far as this overcrowding means the collection of too many persons in a single room, but it can prevent the creation of new causes leading to overcrowding. One of the most prolific of these is the demolition of houses to make way for new streets, new public buildings, new lines of railway, and new

stations. It is particularly the business of Parliament to interfere in this case, because without the intervention of Parliament the evil which has to be dealt with could never have arisen. The consent of Parliament is required for all these improvements. Railway companies and municipal authorities cannot ordinarily obtain the land they need for their several purposes unless Parliament gives them the power of purchasing it without the will of the owner, and supplements all defects of title. There is no obligation upon Parliament to do this, and, consequently, if any harm follows from doing it, Parliament must bear the responsibility. The wholesale clearances which have contributed so largely to the overcrowding of great towns are as much the work of the Legislature as though they had been effected in pursuance of an Act for the speedier eviction of poor tenants. The least that Parliament can do, now that the effect of these clearances has become known, is to take care that there shall be no more of them. Under proper management the construction of every one of these new streets and buildings might have been made an occasion of improving the condition of the persons evicted to make room for them. All that was required was that part of the cleared ground, or other ground in the immediate neighbourhood of it, should have been reserved for the erection of houses suited to the class, and accommodating in the aggregate at least the same number. In London, at all events, it cannot be said that the necessary space was not to be found; for near every block of street or railway improvements there is usually a large tract of unoccupied land. Nor would Parliament have been going beyond the range of its duty in insisting that ground should be reserved for this purpose, since without something of the kind it is impossible properly to compensate the persons who are turned out of their homes. It is universally recognised when Parliament is dealing with persons of a higher class, that public objects are to be pursued with the utmost possible regard for vested interests. Now a vested interest is only an expression for the fact that the measures necessary to attain a particular public object happen to give A. more than his fair share of inconvenience. Every member of the community is bound to make his proportionate sacrifice to the public good, and if the whole burden of the sacrifice is laid upon A., he is just as much injured as though he were subjected to some special tax. We recognise this fact by giving him the value of his interest. Now, when a mass of poor tenants are concerned, their interest in their miserable lodgings hardly admits of being reduced to money. They may be turned out by their landlords at a week's notice, and it has therefore been assumed that to give them a week's rent would make everything straight. But if there are no houses in the neighbourhood for them to move into, this is no compensation at all. They cannot get even as good rooms as those they have been turned out of. If they want to stay on in the same neighbourhood, they must crowd into some house which is already fuller than it ought to be; if they move to a distance, they probably find that they leave their work behind them. It follows from this that any adequate

compensation which can be given them must take the form of a provision of new houses, at a rent not materially greater than that charged for the houses which have been pulled down. Both because Parliament need not consent to these eviction schemes unless it likes, and may consequently sell its consent on its own terms, and because the principle of compensation to vested interests requires that no one man or set of men shall be seriously the worse by reason of any public improvement, it ought in future to be made a condition of all large clearances that the tenants who have been evicted shall have the opportunity of housing themselves at least as well and as conveniently as they have hitherto been able to do. The only consideration which ought to stand in the way would be one founded on the inability of Parliament to turn house-builder. But there is no need for it to do more than decree that proper sites shall be reserved for houses of a particular class. Private or philanthropic enterprise might be trusted to finish the work. As we shall see further on, the acquisition of the site is more than half the battle. There is abundance of money forthcoming to build, provided that the ground on which to build can be had on reasonable terms.

This, then, is all that can be done to diminish overcrowding in the way of direct legislation. Any other measures that may be useful for the same end must have reference to the general condition of the poor, and the best method of improving it. They must be directed to lessen not the evil itself, but the causes which make the poor either less alive to it, or less able to avoid it.

But there is another evil quite as universally distributed, and even more mischievous in its results, which does come within the scope of direct legislation. Parliament can, if it is so minded, enact that every house shall be wholesome. The conditions which make houses, as distinct from situation, wholesome are few and perfectly ascertained. A house must be properly open to the air, it must be provided with sufficient drainage, and it must be secured against the worst forms of damp. In theory, Parliament has the same right to insist on every one of these conditions being satisfied before a house is let or sold for habitation that it has to insist that any other article sold shall be what it professes to be. The law does not allow a baker to sell adulterated bread, or a grocer to sell adulterated sugar, nor is it accepted as a defence that their customers wish to buy bread or sugar at a price too low to allow of their being sold in a pure state. If a shopkeeper wishes to meet the views of this class of customer, he must truly describe the goods sold, and say: This loaf is partly bread and partly potato flour, or, This sugar is brought up to the required weight by the addition of so much sand. This precaution is found sufficient as regards adulteration of food, because the most economical buyers would refuse food, however cheap, which avowed itself to be partly poison. But supposing that the poor could not be trusted to reject poison, supposing that a baker made loaves of some composition which would inevitably generate disease, and, though the fact was plainly stated

on the label affixed to every loaf, continued to find ready purchasers among ignorant or reckless persons, the law would not content itself with insisting that the nature of the composition should be declared to the buyers. It would prohibit the sale altogether; it would declare that, since the poor had not sufficient knowledge or self-control to prevent them from buying poison, in the belief that it would serve the purpose, or must be made to serve the purpose, of wholesome food, they must not have the choice of buying it offered them. All the arguments which apply to the sale of food so adulterated as to be positively poisonous apply with still greater force to the sale and letting of houses so built or arranged as to be positively poisonous. The mischief done is fully as great, for no poison can in the long run do more to injure health and shorten life than the poison conveyed in foul air or damp walls. The inability of the buyer to defend himself against an unprincipled seller is quite as complete, for the causes which make houses unwholesome are not always easy of detection, and even if it were customary to label houses "damp," "undrained," "no ventilation," there would be great risk that the difficulty of finding room, and the desire to pay a low rent, might lead many to let these warnings go unheeded. There is a clear case, then, for the application of the treatment which has been, or under similar circumstances would be, applied to adulteration. Let the law declare that every builder selling a house, and every landlord letting a house, shall be bound to sell or let not merely a house—a building consisting of four walls and a roof—but a wholesome house, a house in a fit state to be lived in, a house in which there is a sufficiency of air, and of air such as human beings can breathe with safety, a house in which damp will not give rheumatism, or sewer gas breed fever. If a building fails to satisfy these requirements, it ought not to be ranked as a house; and the sale or letting, for the purpose of habitation, of any building not answering the definition of a house should be made unlawful.

Of course the full operation of such a statute would have to be postponed for some years. But the principle might be at once applied to all new houses; and as regards houses already in existence it might be applied in conjunction with another provision which would make its application very much easier. The suggestion which has lately met with most support from persons anxious to improve the homes of the poor is that the municipal authorities in towns shall be empowered to destroy all houses condemned by the officers of health, to compensate the owners, and to obtain sites by compulsory purchase for the building of new houses to accommodate the inhabitants. So much has lately been said upon the necessity for an Act of this kind, that it need not be demonstrated here. The three facts which make it necessary are the impossibility of improving many of the houses now inhabited by the poor; the natural unwillingness of the municipal authorities to use even their present powers of demolition when there are no means of compensating the owner for the loss of his property; and the legal and financial difficulty of obtaining sites for new

houses. Anyone who wishes to see these three points proved will find all he wants in an article by Miss Octavia Hill, in the June number of *Macmillan's Magazine*. It is more to the purpose of the present paper to show that unless such an Act be accompanied by an Act forbidding the sale or letting of unwholesome houses, it will be of very little use.

Let it be assumed that the powers which it is proposed to vest in municipalities have been used as extensively as the case requires, that all the houses condemned by the officers of health have been pulled down, and that new ones have been built in their place. A great many of these houses will have been erected by private builders, for it is not to be supposed that the philanthropic societies which may be expected to lead the way in this process will have means sufficient to take it entirely, or even mainly, upon themselves. Their especial usefulness will be as pioneers and examples to others. It may be conceded, too, that these houses will be free from many of the evils belonging to the houses they will have displaced. They will have been built upon sites properly laid out, and so they will escape the want of ventilation which is unavoidable where one row of houses is built upon the gardens of another row, or where the only access to a whole street is through the doorways of the houses which shut out the air at each end. But the private builders left to themselves will not take much pains with the interior of their houses. They will be sure of letting them as soon as they are finished, and there will be no reason why they should spend money in preventing the ground-damp from rising through the floors, or in constructing adequate drains. The cost of ventilating a soil pipe, of disconnecting the scullery sink from the sewer, of providing a proper outlet for the waste water, so that the cistern shall not be filled with sewer gas, and of similar sanitary precautions of the simplest kind, is not great, but to the ordinary small builder it will seem a perfectly needless addition to the cost of a house; and if he is left free to incur this cost, or to leave it alone, he will in most cases choose the latter alternative. Besides this, these arrangements must be kept in repair, and for a long time to come, at all events, the class of tenants which will inhabit the houses will be specially likely to put them out of repair. Even if the landlord sees his way to recovering the cost of repairs out of the tenants in the shape of increased rent, it will save him risk, trouble, and present outlay if he leaves things as they are. There can be little doubt that without such a law to enforce wholesomeness, a large number of the new houses built under such a scheme as that in force in Glasgow would be unwholesome to start with; and that even if by a miracle they were wholesome to start with, the larger part of them would have ceased to be so before five years were over. On the other hand, the possession by all municipalities of powers resembling those in force at Glasgow would very much smooth the working of a law compelling all houses to be and remain wholesome. Any further increase of the evil would be prevented by the immediate application of the law to all houses built after the passing of the Act; and as regards

houses already in existence, they might be examined and reported on by the officers of health, and arranged in classes according as they were capable or incapable of substantial improvement. Those belonging to the latter class would be at once condemned. They would be cleared away as fast as new houses could be provided for their inmates, and their owner would be paid a sum, to be settled by arbitration, in consideration of the loss sustained by him. If, on the other hand, a house, or a group of houses, were reported capable of improvement, the nature and probable cost of the repairs would be indicated to the owner, and he would be ordered to have them executed by a certain date, with the option of selling the houses at a valuation in the event of his not wishing to lay out further money on them. These measures would need time for their full development; but in proportion as they came into operation the ultimate end of such legislation, the making the sale or letting of any house not provided with certain specified sanitary appliances an offence against the law, would be brought nearer.

It will probably be conceded that such a law as has here been described would, if properly carried out, constitute a complete remedy for the unwholesomeness of houses. If the essential sanitary requisites were defined by Act of Parliament, and if no house which did not possess them were allowed to be sold or let for habitation, it would obviously be the interest of the landlord to put his houses into proper sanitary repair in the first instance, and to keep them in that state afterwards. Nor would this involve any grievance beyond those isolated cases of individual hardship which are inevitable whenever any large measure of reform has to be carried out. No doubt the tendency of the law would be to drive men without capital out of the business, since they would not have the ready money with which to pay for the repairs. But the interest of the community seems to demand that some trades should be in the hands of men who can afford to wait for a return on their investments, and the trade in houses is one of these. The provision for compensation if a house is destroyed, and the facilities given for getting rid of the house in the event of the owner not caring to spend more money on it, seem to meet these cases, so far as they can be met by any general rule. The objections which will probably be urged against the proposal are two—one relating to the machinery of the Act, the other to the amount and incidence of its cost. There is a strong feeling in this country that of late years we have been too much given over into the hands of the irrepressible inspector; and if wholesome houses could only be obtained by submission to a new and stringent system of surveillance, it may be questioned whether the majority of Englishmen would not rather be let alone in unwholesome houses. There will be no need, however, for anything of the kind. The main requirements of the Act will be satisfied when a house is reported by the surveyor to come up to the prescribed standard in respect of sanitary appliances. When once this inspection has been made, the result will hold good for a long period, because some of the most im-

portant of these appliances are of a kind which cannot well get out of order. Already in towns a certain amount of supervision is exercised over new houses. The walls must be of a certain thickness, the distance from the opposite houses must measure a certain number of feet. All that is now proposed is, that the official examination should be extended to essentials as regards drainage and ventilation; that pipes and traps should be forthcoming in proper places; that there should be no unguarded communication between the sewers and the interior of the house; that there should be a sufficient use of concrete in the foundations; that no room should be without due provision for the withdrawal and supply of air. As regards all these matters, a house which had once been reported fit for habitation might remain fit for many years. A periodical inspection might be made at each renewal of a lease or change of ownership, and the correction of defects coming into existence in the interval might be left to the existing agencies for the inspection and removal of nuisances. The other objection is the increased cost of wholesome as compared with unwholesome houses. If unwholesome houses were allowed to exist side by side with wholesome houses, this might be a difficulty of great moment, because of the natural disposition on the part of the poor to consider rent before health. But inasmuch as no houses will be allowed to fall short of a certain standard, there will be no opportunity for the exercise of this preference. House-rent may rise somewhat in consequence of the change in the law, but it will rise universally. If it is said that this will not make the grievance less, the answer is, that just as it would be better that the poor should be compelled to give 9*d.* for a loaf made of flour, rather than 6*d.* for one made partly of flour and partly of powdered white lead, so it is better that they should pay 3*s.* 6*d.* a-week for a wholesome room, rather than 2*s.* 6*d.* for an unwholesome room. The shilling added to the rent will be more than saved by that greater ability to work and to refrain from drink which will come with better health and better habits. Nor need the rise in rent be at all considerable. When once builders know what will be required in every new house, more attention will be given to the manufacture of simple sanitary appliances on a large scale, and at a low rate. The increase in the demand will have its ordinary effect of cheapening production, and it will in the end be found that, but for the perverted ingenuity of builders, pure air can be had at no greater cost than foul air. The houses of the poor ought not to be made a vehicle for sanitary experiments; it will be enough if their arrangements conform to those elementary laws of drainage and ventilation which it is as cheap to obey as to disregard.

The Old Cosmopolitan.

WHEN the Hon. Raikes Lawless, fifth son of the eleventh Baron Lawless of Bletchingley, died in the dull season at Les Sources, the event created but little sensation either in that favourite watering-place or elsewhere. It was announced neither in *The Times*, *Galvani*, nor the *Courrier des Sources*. No member of the Lawless family hastened to Les Sources to make the preliminary arrangements for obsequies which were simple to meanness. The modest *cortège* consisted of Her Britannic Majesty's Vice-Consul, who had latterly acted as banker and almoner to the deceased, plodding along under his white cotton umbrella, and—so far as the threshold of the street door—of the French medical man who had attended the deceased in his last illness. Yet in his five and forty years of feverish life—"æ. 63" was inscribed on the rude coffin-plate of tinsel,—Raikes Lawless had made as many friends as any half-dozen of his average contemporaries. He had a brother and several sisters surviving, a score of first cousins, nephews and nieces innumerable, and finally, a couple of highly respectable sons, one of them a dignitary of the Church, the other an eminently well-informed Secretary of Legation.

The fact was, there was an hereditary fatality in the Lawless family. From time immemorial each second generation had gone more or less to the dogs, while the one that succeeded atoned for the follies of its fathers by assuming a double portion of starch and austerity. And it must be owned that the ritualistic canon of Canterbury and the prim secretary at San Marino had had reasons in abundance for blushing for their more brilliant parent. While the one of them was cropping his thin hair and scrupulously passing the razor over an almost beardless chin; while the other was fast turning bald, and training a couple of wisps over a lofty but meagre forehead, the father was carrying a vigorous head of hair that all his worries had only grizzled slightly, and their respective *chevelures* were types of their respective individualities and reputations. To do them justice, the sons had had some cause of complaint. More than once social considerations had forced them to compound their parent's debts, or at least for as many of them as he thought fit to submit in his schedule of liabilities. After repeated threats of cutting him off with a shilling, they had finally severed personal connection with the prodigal, merely remitting a modest monthly pension to the far country where he was compelled to vegetate debt-bound. Scandal fairly wearied out, had almost ceased to talk about him. And when the reverend canon learned at last that he was orphaned, who shall question the fervent gratitude of

the ejaculations in which he thanked Providence for his unfortunate father's release?

Yet Raikes Lawless in his time had had as many friends, and moved to the last in as extensive a circle of appreciative acquaintance, as any man. Had he even had the luck to die in the height of the season at Les Sources, if many enquiries had not been made at his door, at least he would have had plenty of mourners to see him to his resting-place among the cypresses. To the very last he was eminently popular in certain sets of the English community there. He was as much at home in the French Cercle as in his countrymen's club. In the sumptuous apartments occupied by American millionaires he was made almost invariably welcome. No wonder. He was an honourable member of an ancient family whose fame was historical. He was still what he always had been—one of the most agreeable of companions; irresistible in a *tête-à-tête*, because he knew so well how to suit his talk to his company. He was an inimitable *causeur* and *raconteur*, for he was blessed with a tenacious memory as well as a ready wit and a keen sense of the humorous, and he drew the stories that lost nothing in the telling, from the ample store of his varied experience. To the last his manners were perfect—when he pleased—with men for the most part he was brusque and boisterous. But the caressing change that came over them when he softened his voice and addressed himself to women was the more insensibly flattering. He would talk with a smile so sweet and winning that even the somewhat sensual fullness of his lips and chin could not spoil it. That smile of his should have had much to answer for, and yet there was little hypocrisy in it. Lawless was good natured, and in a sense good hearted, although his conduct had been condemned as highly reprehensible even by the easier morality of the older generation of cosmopolitans. But time had mellowed his reputation, and it might be presumed that he had repented or expiated one or two scandalously notorious incidents in his earlier career. The sins of his youth won him the respectful admiration of young sinners still, while the most excellent of women believed their company had a chastening influence on the veteran reprobate, as very likely it had.

Yes: had Lawless died during the season at Les Sources, his death must have made a sensation and left a blank. Everyone would have missed the loud cheery voice that enlivened the club, especially towards the small hours, the rich rolling laugh, and the bluff burly figure. For half a dozen years at the least he had been a celebrity in the place. He came there at first, heaven knows how or why, turning up at the *Hôtel des Etrangers* at the beginning of a winter. Time at first hung upon his hands, but that winter they took to higher play than before in the English club, and no doubt Lawless had a good deal to say in fixing the stakes. Two franc points were multiplied by ten, with a couple of Napoleons on the rubber, and the odds in Napoleons on the course of the game. Lawless, of course, played whist admirably, as he did every game of skill: a little too brilliantly, perhaps, and his foreign tactics would

sometimes puzzle his English partners; but science pulled him through in the end, and he made an excellent thing of it. It was matter of small surprise to anybody, that he kept up appearances and honourably paid his way all through that first fortunate season, and the knowing ones counted confidently on his reappearance in the following one, much as he abused the dreary dullness of the place. He did come back, sure enough. But science cannot control the uncertain elements of luck; and for a whole fortnight at the beginning of that second year he scarcely held an honour in his hand. When the cards did come over to him, and he should have had his revenge, he was balked by a couple of young and speculative Americans levanting heavily in his debt. The knot of high players had been driven to assent to running accounts and monthly settlements under penalty of sacrificing the high rubbers, and this was the result. The sum of his losses was a bagatelle to that of the gains and losses of his palmier days, yet that brief campaign proved decisive to his future destiny. He quitted the Hôtel des Étrangers for the modest apartment in the unfashionable side street where he died, and that apartment became his home henceforth. How he lived was always an inscrutable mystery to his most familiar friends, although, on the subject of his embarrassments generally, he was freespoken enough. He dressed decently, he hacked a solid though sober animal in the season, he dined quietly at a good restaurant when he was not entertained elsewhere, as he commonly was. Above all, he was always to be found at the whist tables of an afternoon or evening when he was not seated at *carté* with the Frenchmen, playing for stakes ruinously high for him, and paying up honourably when he failed to win. But never again was he suffered to stir from Les Sources on *parole* or otherwise. The ties that bound him to the second *étage* let to him by the buxom *modiste* below might be as nearly invisible as those spun by the soft-voiced enchantress in Thalaba, but it was just as difficult to break them. Otherwise he would never have lingered on when everything and everyone was gone that helped to make his life endurable; lingered on in the dismal isolation of solitude, like Campbell's last man, but with Remorse and Despair for his companions in place of Faith and Hope. Doubtless he had a hard time enough even when he had some sort of society or stimulant, and when for the best part of each successive day he could look forward to some kind of excitement. If the conversation flagged of a sudden after a cheery dinner, the smile would die as suddenly on his lips, and a film of gloom would extinguish the laugh in his eye. It is to be feared that he was generally hounded home by a pack of the blue devils that were always in waiting, and hunted in his broken slumbers by hopes that had turned to nightmares. But in the long baking summer, when every soul who could go had been scorched out of the place; when doctors, waiters, and livery stable hacks had all made an exodus to the cooler shores of the ocean, then those blue devils must have got him down and fairly worried him:

only that iron constitution of his, and those once indomitable spirits, could have prolonged his wretchedness for another season.

Five and thirty years ago no man started in life with brighter hopes and fairer chances. By that hereditary law of alternations we have alluded to, his father, the eleventh Lord Lawless, had been highly respectable and something more. He had held a somewhat commanding position first in the Lower House and then in the Upper one. He was not a very wealthy man and he had a fair quiverful of children, but he had picked out his clever younger son to push in diplomacy and do the family credit. He had friends in high places all over Europe, and could furnish Raikes with excellent introductions everywhere. The young man, as it happened, had good Catholic connections too—an "Open Sesame" to the innermost circles at the courts of the Pontiff and the Italian Princes, of their Most Christian and Catholic Majesties, and of the Kaiser. Among these connections, and his Protestant ones, were sundry ancient aunts, rich and childless, who were ready enough to pet and tip the clever, captivating lad who had been something of a scapegrace from his earliest boyhood. Had he only known how to be wise in time, had he only sown his wild oats and had done with it, he might have gone any reasonable distance at any rational pace, he might have kicked over the traces any number of times, he might have reformed and inherited, married happily, won reputation and harvested honours, and died rich and highly respected.

He made a brilliant *début*, as might have been expected. He threw off as attaché in Paris in the latter days of the elder branch of the Bourbons. His father had offered graceful hospitalities to the brother of Louis the Martyr while the Prince was an exile and a vagabond in England, and Charles X. was willing enough to repay them. He was connected by marriage with the Polignac family. He had the *entrée* in the most exclusive Parisian salons, and he profited by it. He read ravenously in his *moments perdus*; returning home from dance or dissipation of any kind, he read himself to sleep with plays or novels or the most solid political literature, as the case might be. He studied politics in his light desultory fashion, in season and out of season. In those days he had his ambitions—ambitions he would perhaps have laughed at later had he not had so much more cause to sigh—and with somewhat similar capabilities, he dreamed a career like that of Talleyrand. Unluckily for his worldly success he wanted the constancy of purpose and calculating selfishness of the ex-bishop, and the times were slow, and he sought to shoot excitement in the flying moments. He was ever in love or fancying himself in love, and *bonnes fortunes* came so easily to him, that he was always being on with the new love before he was well off with the old. He made enemies, and spiteful ones, as fast as friends; Medeas were mixing poisoned cups behind this English Jason, and Didos were gulping down their sighs and plotting revenge. His reputation was growing daily and daily diminishing as well. His reputation, such as it

was, came enormously expensive to him. He was naturally generous, and where he pretended to love he lavished presents. He was high-spirited, and he was no Churchill, to sell his favours to duchesses who might gladly have bought them. He had a younger son's portion irregularly paid, with tastes and habits that might have suited a Marquis of Hertford, or the owner of the purse of Fortunatus. There was one way of replenishing the purse that was always on the flow, and a very tempting one. Those were the days when Frescati's was in full swing, and counting its reckless clients among the leading celebrities of Europe. The chink of the *rouleaux* changing hands was heard perpetually from the first-floor windows of the Palais Royal. Not a party in Paris, public or private, where free play was not one of the amusements of the evening. It was about the time when the future Lord Dalling, a diplomat like Lawless, won the 5,000*l.* in Paris that proved the stepping-stones of his fortune, as Mr. Hayward has told us in a recently republished essay. Lawless was a born gamester. Through life he always loved high stakes in everything—loved them the better that he knew a run of ill-luck would be ruin. When heavy losses might have proved his salvation, of course the Devil pretended to stand his friend. Lawless held on his way; the almost penniless Englishman led the *train* of a prince, and the end of all things came when Polignac published his *ordonnances*, and the legitimate dynasty of St. Louis vacated the Tuileries to the advantage of the Citizen King.

Lawless never had such a time again. He had acquired the costly tastes that were to be his bane, and made the great acquaintances who helped to ruin him. He was transferred to the Court of Florence, and was as welcome to the Grand Duke as ever he had been to the King. He had come to have implicit faith in his luck, and counted, of course, on something like his old income. He launched himself dashing in Florentine society, as if his luck must assure his making a brilliant voyage of it. He gave bachelor dinners at his hotel and at the Luna, that, in their way, out-shone those of his chief, and were at least as much sought after. There was no more brilliant bachelor equipage than his in the Cascone. He made love at once to a daughter of the Minister *pour le bon motif*; and to the fascinating Principessa di Fiesole for the *mauvais* one. He embroiled himself with his chief accordingly at the very moment when he stood most in need of good backing from the Legation. For the springs were running low that had so long fed his extravagance. At games of chance he scarcely cleared sufficient to pay his gloves and his whip-lashes. He shone and won at whist and *écarté*, but safe gains and modest returns no longer satisfied his out-goings or aspirations. The sparkling attaché came to unutterable smash. The vengeful Minister threatened an action for breach of promise, which would have been ridiculous, or else the horsewhip, which would have been worse than dangerous; and one course and the other were alike superfluous to the gratification of his vengeance. Lawless was hopelessly insolvent, and

utterly ruined as a rising public man. He withdrew with characteristic dignity from His Majesty's diplomatic service, and started adventurer on his own account.

When he came to the surface, after his first ugly plunge in the chilling waters of adversity, with his vigorous health and buoyant temperament, he found his circulation all the better. If his very miscellaneous acquaintance happened to know that he had come to pecuniary grief, no one of them thought any the worse of him. Perhaps these harum-scarum years that followed his resignation were the most enjoyable in his life, when he went knocking about all over Europe, giving care and his creditors the slip, with nothing like a habitation or a settled home, and with all his worldly wealth in his portmanteaux and dressing case. He was the Flying Dutchman of cosmopolitan society, here to-day and gone to-morrow, although his hosts generally were ready enough to keep him. From the banks of the Scheldt to those of the Danube, he was always made welcome in a country house, whether battues, balls, or private theatricals were the order of the day. If he put up at an hotel anywhere on any of the grand routes, ten to one in a day or two he had the offer of a lift in a travelling chariot. It would have been far better for him in the end, had he been content to leave well alone. He was growing more prudent as he got on in years; occasionally he would burn his fingers or break a small bone in an escapade; but as a rule his whist and billiards franked him from one billet to another, and left him the means of being very generous to the servants, who welcomed him cap in hand, or took leave of him tear in eye, according to their sexes. His noble father began to believe that Raikes had sacrificed sufficiently to the Nemesis of his generation, and might still be no discredit to it, if little credit. So he volunteered some help to a man who seemed to be helping himself, and offered to renew a very small allowance.

Raikes Lawless came to shipwreck on that skeleton of a competency. That slight taste of a fixed income suggested to him the idea of affluent independence, and turned his dreams in the direction of matrimony. He cast the handkerchief to a widow, with a handsome jointure of her own and a good deal of property in the funds and at the India House—he was in residence at Rome that winter. He was not a bad man of business when he chose to apply his mind to a transaction; but he met his match in the widow and her friends. They insisted that all the property should be strictly settled on herself and the issue of the marriage, and there for some time the negotiations hung. Raikes's Bedouin instincts warned him to be wise in time, but he hated wasting trouble, and had taken a fancy to the widow's fortune. He was like the horse who has smelt the sieveful of oats, and cannot for the life of him help nibbling, although the halter that awaits him hangs dangling before his eyes. He married on a large income and became a miserable man, as he made his wife a miserable woman. They had a house in Brook Street for the season, and out of it tried living at her late husband's seat in Hampshire.

They had a couple of children—the future canon and the attaché. They had a great many nuptial squalls, often blowing into storms, and occasionally to tornadoes. They separated informally but finally by mutual consent, and Lawless left the lady in England and resumed his roving life on the Continent. No doubt his name and title and a couple of charming children were not the only *souvenirs* he left her of their brief connection. Thenceforward she had the privilege of participating in his money troubles and ministering to his voracious necessities. Whatever the terms they separated on, it is certain a good deal of money must have been subsequently remitted him from time to time, although probably the payments were of uncertain amount, and made at very irregular intervals. Any regular pension he would infallibly have mortgaged, as he did later, when his lady died and he claimed a small annuity under the settlement.

It was at this time that he entered on what was, in some respects, the most respectable phase of his existence. That he lived apart from his wife—no one being bound to understand that their connection was permanently severed—did him no injury with the men he mixed with, and rather helped him with the women. He had married and “ranged himself,” and become a man of means, yet he was free from all matrimonial incumbrances. His habits of life showed all the signs of a substantial financial position. Railways had scarcely begun to be talked about; he had his own neat travelling carriage and his Swiss valet, whose acquaintance with people and things was pretty nearly as extensive as his master's. He revolved from capital to capital, received everywhere in the very best society. Arrived in a place, his first visit was to the Minister, who, even if he were not a personal friend, asked him to dinner as a matter of course. Then he paid his respects straightway to the Court, and was pretty sure to be entertained there, and honoured with special commands for the royal or princely card tables. It was not only that he played a good hand, that he lost his money, when he did lose, with the easy indifference of a grand seigneur, that he spoke the different foreign tongues with an ease and purity that not half a dozen of his compatriots could boast of, that he thought the thoughts of his company, and caught the trick of their speech. But he had much of the French sparkle, the affectation of the German solidity, and a great deal of the Italian suppleness and subtlety. He carried about with him everywhere the bluntness of his English bearing, yet in the presence of princes he could tone it down without either the show or the sense of subserviency, just as he did when paying his court to women. To borrow a vulgar expression, he could always take the measure of their feet; yet somehow when jealous courtiers abused him for a toady, people felt that he was having hard measure dealt him. No wonder courtiers were jealous. It was not lightness alone that made his talk so taking—nor his *bons mots* and readiness of repartee that created his social reputation. His omnivorous reading and retentive memory had served him admirably; without making any pretensions to literary knowledge or systematical learning of any kind, he had passed a

good part of his life with the Shakspeares, Goethes, and Alfieris, and he managed to spare a good deal of his precious time to associating with living writers in their writings. If he met them in the flesh, he made his way straight to their friendship, thanks to the appreciative intimacy he displayed with their choicer beauties. Even the fastidious M. de Chateaubriand found time to correspond with him, after he had paid his respects to the Count in his Swiss seclusion. So carefully shunning pedantry and parade, the changing charms of Lawless's conversation helped him to a great many good personal friendships in the very highest quarters. His dusty travelling carriage had scarcely rolled up to the door of "The Grapes," or "The Golden Stag," than the joyful tidings of his arrival were carried to the blank and cheerless interior of the gloomy *Residenz*. Speedily the jolly host of the Hirsch would come bowing and cringing upstairs, ushering the wooden figure of one of his Serene Transparency's military *Aides-de-Camp*, who would carry his hand to the salute and convey his master's message. And that very afternoon, towards the primitive hour of four, Lawless might be seen picking his way across the weed-grown Platz and under the ill-kept alleys of the Schloss Garten, on his way to a court dinner at the princely residence. It was not all fun by any means. The dinners were sometimes execrable, and the entertainers by no means lively. He hated dining in the afternoon, while breakfast was in process of digestion; the suppers, with their *kaltfleisch* and sweet sauces and *sauerkraut*, were as heavy as the interminable tragedy he might have to sit out in the Grand Ducal box; while the promenade he had to turn out for in the Schloss terrace with the prince at an early hour on the following morning was a painful and questionable remedy for dyspepsia. Yet all these things paid him in more ways than one. Not only was it gratifying to find men in high places delighting to honour him everywhere; not only was it flattering to be hail-fellow-well-met in a congress of crowned heads and princes when he graced one of the aristocratic watering-places with his presence in the height of the season. But it was very profitable as well. He was encouraged to owe money everywhere. It was impossible for the Hof tradespeople to press the friend of their autocratic sovereign when it was inconvenient for him to pay. And we may be sure the friend of princes found private persons in abundance who were only too honoured in being permitted to come down liberally for the honour of his acquaintance. When sojourning anywhere, he need never dine, breakfast, or sup at his own expense. He had his admirers, always eager to lose or lend him their money; it is certain that Baron Guldenstern the Viennese banker, who had set his heart on the Grand Duke of Tuscany's order of Santa Croce, volunteered to honour his cheques one whole winter at Florence; while season after season one of the celebrated Silberschmidts—the great Jewish house in the Zeil of Frankfort—appeared in his train at Wiesbaden and Baden-Baden, sinking a portion of his vast capital in aspiring to a certain mastery over the beautiful but intricate game of piquet.

All this time Lawless had his own ideas of honour and his private code of principles, and he rarely did violence either to the one or the other. He might pay his court to potentates who bored him, and accept the obsequious attention of men he disliked or despised. An adventurer to be successful must live in a certain style, and all callings have their drawbacks. But he always carried his head high, and spoke his mind freely on occasions, especially when suffering from a twinge of the gout or a touch of indigestion. His independence was of actual service to him in the multiplicity of his patrons, for he could afford to play the one off against the others. Were the Prince of Schweinsfleisch to *bouder* his guest for his freedom of speech and the want of deference in his demeanour, he knew he would only lose an agreeable companion. Lawless had nothing to do but order his carriage and drive off to the Grand Duke of Kalbsbraten next day, where he was sure of a hearty welcome. So in money transactions and games of chance and skill. Lawless made little scruple or none when Guldenstern settled his winter's hotel bill at Florence under some delicate pretext. No man could carry off that kind of thing better, or accept a humiliation with a grander air. He clipped Silberschmidt in all *bonhomie* and good fellowship so long as that avaricious but ambitious Israelite thought it worth his while to offer his fleece to the shearer. Had Silberschmidt believed himself the Englishman's master at *piquet*, Lawless would have stripped him of his money with infinitely greater zest. But one thing we must say. In those more prosperous days Lawless never would rob the young and innocent, even when their overweening self-confidence might have provoked him to read them a lesson. Nay, he more than once saved a juvenile reprobate by a well-timed word of warning, which was sometimes listened to, coming from a man whose somewhat sinister reputation and antecedents entitled him to every respect. Later it might possibly have been otherwise. Extreme necessity guards but few scruples; if it pays attention to strict laws, it is the utmost you can reasonably expect of it. But to the last poor Lawless hated pigeon plucking, although he may have had occasionally to condescend to it as to some other things he despised himself for.

The life for a time was well enough, and then he began to weary of it. He may have been mistaken, but he felt he had been made for other and better things. If he had sowed his wild oats quickly, and settled early and suitably, he had an idea that he might have been very happy in a home. The fancy grew on him, till it positively haunted his broken nights and embittered his long melancholy morning hours. It finished by poisoning the roving existence that so many envied him, but whose excitements, as he knew in his sober moments, had become indispensable to what he called happiness. About his powers and talents at least there could be no question, although he only began to appreciate them himself now that he learned how much and how little they had done for him. His very social successes stung him: if he had gone so far and succeeded so well with so little effort, where might he not have landed himself

had he only taken life in earnest? Sometimes he flattered himself that it was scarcely too late even now; redoubled energy might redeem a sufficient portion of the wasted time, and he might still compound for a part of all that timely forethought and ceaseless determination might have gained him. At any rate the very experiment might be salutary. By way of feeling his way, for he dreaded the ridicule with which a *réformation manquée* would cover him, he withdrew himself one summer to an old schloss he rented in the Riesengebirge in Bohemia. He shot and fished and read—we may be sure he thought a very great deal. In wet days and odd hours, sometimes under the influence of violent exercise in the forests, often under the stimulus of the wine bottle, he threw off a work so quaint and vigorous, so eloquent and original, showing such varied knowledge of men and books, containing an analysis so nice of vice and virtue, feeling and passions, that it created a sensation almost amounting to a *furor* in spite of its blemishes of style and the evidences of reckless composition. It ran straight through half a score of editions, and was translated straightway into half as many languages. And Lawless had scarcely flung it into the Press, than he rushed back again to the world and the swine trough, completely satisfied that his experiment had failed. Nor did the success of his book change his opinion. He had satisfied himself that a quiet life was distraction to him, and study with a fixed purpose impossible. He never cared to avow the anonymous authorship, although he never denied it. In a month or two he plunged into society and dissipation with all the recklessness and avidity of fifteen years before. It was in the season after his summer in Bohemia, that he eloped with the lady of the bedchamber from Berlin and passed his sword through the injured husband afterwards. A spectre the more added to the many that were haunting him; and although the Graf did strike him in the face in the Corso at Rome in full carnival, and although everything afterwards was done according to the most rigid laws of honour, no one mourned for the unfortunate Prussian longer or more sincerely than the man who slew him.

Nothing seemed to prosper with Lawless after that—so he always said on the very rare occasions when, in talk with an intimate, he alluded to the most sinister incident of his career. After the duel and the elopement—the lady left him soon—Englishmen and Englishwomen, old acquaintances of his, began to look shy on him. Married potentates began to ask him to supper instead of dinner, and he used to be shown into palaces by the back staircase more often than by the front one. Then his old allies and patrons began to die out, and a new generation arose, who cared less for his company. Years and his worries had begun to touch him. He drank more than he used to do; and although his still vigorous constitution enabled him to carry his liquor discreetly, he had something of Falstaff's figure, with a good deal of Bardolph's nose. He had always liked good living, but now the somewhat sensual development of his chin said as much. He had lost the excellent appetite that used to break agreeably

the most melancholy days; he ate very regularly still, but he was seldom or ever hungry. Indigestion and dyspepsia nourished the blue devils; they visited him more frequently than ever, and seemed to have grown more malignant. Then his money embarrassments had become terrible. His wife had died, and left him entitled to 600*l.* per annum for life, neither more nor less. Had he been a free man, he might have existed on the money, with prudence. But as Satan claims his bond after a time in the old legends, so now the creditors who had given Lawless his swing for so long, at last became simultaneously clamorous everywhere. Had they been able to assign their debtor formally in bankruptcy, it might have given rise to some odd and intricate questions in international insolvent law. But Lawless took excellent care not to risk himself where the danger was imminent. As Richard Swiveller sealed one street with a pair of gloves and another with a dinner, until at length it seemed likely he would have to leave town to go along the Strand, so Lawless could only zig-zag about Europe by the most fantastically circuitous détours. It was not surprising he fell out of many of his old friendships, when he found a many-headed Cerberus baying at him from every threshold where he used to be hospitably received. Perhaps pecuniary exhaustion and growing despondency were the twin causes of his settling in the first place at Les Sources. So we have seen migratory small birds drop in the rigging of a ship in mid-ocean, although they could scarcely have cared for their new company, and would gladly have pursued their flight, and followed the bent of their instinct, had strength and circumstances permitted.

Since the days when his decline might be said to have begun, we have only glanced at the incidents of Lawless's career. Were his memoirs to be published, or had his correspondence been preserved, it might have been divided roughly into a couple of periods. The first and earlier, brief *billets-doux* and briefer answers to off-hand invitations. The second, or later, protests, protocols, and petitions on urgent financial questions. His wife while she lived must have sent him, as we said, a good deal of money at one time or another. His sons, after she died, had to arrange more than once with pressing creditors, and made him at last a very moderate allowance, paid in minute sums, at frequent intervals. Yet, however he managed to come by it, money he generally had to the last, although he must often have been reduced to dire necessity. Did he beg it or borrow it, and if so, where? The mystery, possibly, will never be solved. But to the last, as we said, he indulged in high play at Les Sources, and he met his I.O.U.'s when the game had gone against him.

If remorse and regrets may be accepted for repentance—if there is any such thing as an earthly purgatory, where man may be purged, by suffering, of the sins and follies of one's earlier existence, Lawless's sojourn at Les Sources should have been very salutary to him. If ever mortal did penance where he sinned, and worked out expiation by it, surely he did. Dragging on towards the dishonoured grave he had always before his

eyes ; longing for repose, and yet only doubting whether he should ever find it ; with a constitution shattered like his hopes, and sensibilities morbidly sharpened by his sorrows ; living the ghastly caricature of his former life ; holding his old language from habit, and often thinking his old thoughts, yet thinking very differently when left to himself, and profoundly, as only a man could think who was gifted with his power of reflection ; liked to the last by those who knew him the best, and shrinking all the time from a liking that must be akin to pity ; dying deserted by all but a couple of men whose hearts he had won—a foreign doctor, who refused his fees, and a British official, who deferred his holiday to help him ; the end of this brilliant, vicious, good-hearted, jolly old cosmopolitan, was the very symbol of his whole miserable life.

De Mortuis—Omnia.

Who does not remember the greediness of the Athenians for news? The love of gossip was one of their most striking characteristics, and "What news?" was as much part of the business of the Agora when friends met each other at noon, as the price of the freshest thunny or the condition of the flower-girl's violets. No event was too small for them to chronicle; no shifting of life's kaleidoscope too minute for them to follow; and it may also be added, few characters too high for them to respect by reticence, or too low for them to ignore by silence. Maid, matron, and hetaira; statesman and slave; the favourite poet's latest ode; the fashionable ephist's last oration; what blunder of uncouth simplicity the newest importation from Sparta had committed over night at the table of his luxurious entertainer; and how that fair-faced Bœotian in the Coan vest yonder, was spoiled so soon as she opened her pretty mouth and spoke; of all things under heaven and on earth so far as they knew them, and of some they did not know, they discoursed freely; discussing and dissecting without reticence, without stint, as no other people have done before or since. They were the lovers of gossip *par excellence*, and Athens was the paradise of all the newsmongers of the time; for neither dramatist nor orator could get a hearing if a witless fellow raised the cry; "News! news! news from the Hesperides; news from the Cassiterides; news of Glaucus; news of Phryne; who will hear my news?"

But even the Athenians had their limits and knew when to forbear. If they laughed out a babbling welcome to the winged Hermes carrying men's words and deeds as freight from land to land, they paid reverence to the Egyptian-born Harpocrates and respected the sign he made. The line of gossip must be drawn somewhere, if they would not be like their own harpies ravening and befouling all things; and they drew it at the door of the tomb. The dead were as sacred to them as the gods; Hades as impenetrable as Olympus. So much of latent delicacy underlaid this sunny old-world love of gossip, this chattering, laughing, light-minded delight in personal details. Yet the Athenians were "heathens" in the common language of our day; their civilisation was but a poor superficial kind of thing compared with our own, we say complacently, lifting our eyes from our statistics of crime and poverty; and their philosophy, their religion, stands nowhere side by side with our deeper sense of the obligations of morality, our keener vision of God, and what we know of the spiritual nature of man, hidden from them. Nevertheless the Athenians respected the memory of their dead; and we do not.

Their quality of human pity, of human honour, their sense of fairness even as man to man, came into play when there was none to reply; and the man who would not have scrupled to have lampooned his living friend, to have made him a butt for any number of damaging jests, and to have betrayed his secrets to inconvenient listeners, would have thought himself shamed and dishonoured for ever had he carried his treachery or his tattle beyond the grave—had he accused when defence was impossible, and betrayed when secure from revenge. The ghost wandering mournfully in the pale world of shadows had still susceptibilities and affections to be wounded by the poisoned arrows and insulted by coarse handling; and the tender fragrance of love, the nobler offering of honour, were assumed, not unreasonably, to be as much his due now when helpless and silent as when he walked self-protecting, face to face among his fellows, their equal if not their master.

Formerly, too, a certain faithfulness of obedience went hand in hand with this sacredness of silence as the only loyal method known of showing respect to the dead. His wishes were to be carried out as honourably as if he still had power to enforce them; just as his weaknesses were to be as lightly touched as if he was to be met half an hour hence at the next street corner to discuss with his biographer what had been said of him; and above all, the mysteries of his inner life, his private feelings, his secret sorrows, things which he himself had so jealously concealed, were to be religiously kept from the coarse gossip, the cold gaze of the world. No friend would have said of the dead he had loved and lived with, words which it would have been dishonourable to have said of the living; words, indeed, which he dared not have said of the living; for the same cause as that which makes it impossible for a high-minded gentleman to speak ill of the absent who cannot defend themselves. The very helplessness of the dead was their safeguard against indiscretion as against slander; and *de mortuis nil nisi bonum* only expressed the general respect for that helplessness.

We have changed all that old-time honour, all that bygone loyalty of reticence. We have gone in now for a coarse and cruel chatter we call euphemistically candour, but which is in reality nothing but love of scandal and of gossip carried to the highest point of indecency. Death, instead of drawing the veil closer and with more reverent protection round the memory of one's friend, is the signal for flinging it off as a rag which has fulfilled its uses; for opening all doors; prying into all corners; publishing every secret which, when living, the poor fellow had guarded with such anxious care; proclaiming broadly, positively, every vague and half-formed doubt; dissecting every sacred thought; tossing as a curiosity to the crowd to be bandied about from each to each, gaped at, wondered at by the callous and those who never grieved, every hidden sorrow; offering as a sacrifice to the Avengers, to be branded as a monstrosity, every ordinary human frailty, every small and common divergence from the straight and narrow path. Now it is the irrepressible interviewer who

lurks in the shadow of the sick chamber and photographs the details of the death-bed with revolting minuteness; now it is the private friend who turns into literary capital his former intimacy with the illustrious dead, and makes the whole world free of confidences given to him in trust. Between the hunters and the betrayers the security of the grave has gone; exhaled like the dew of the morning in the fierce glare of the noon-tide; and the sharpness of the sting of death is increased by the knowledge of what is to come after all else is over.

No sooner does a great man die than every miserable secret is made public property. The various stages of his disease are reported *in extenso*, and surgical and pathological facts flood the newspapers and magazines, which, had he foreseen their publication, would have added immeasurable anguish to his pain. His most careless as well as his most confidential letters are published crudely, as they were dashed off in a moment of unreflecting expansion; and fat heads wag exultingly over banalities which reconcile them to themselves and their own imbecility. Homer nods, and the asses bray. If he has committed what the world calls an indiscretion, the woman and her children are exhibited in the pages of the memorialist as one exhibits waxwork figures in a raree show; and the love which he had cherished in secret, and may be repented of in agony, is beaten out into so many paragraphs of prurient sensationalism, with more hinted at, says the chronicler, than it is safe or decent to detail. Had he an unfortunate attachment, where the course had run rough and not smooth, the world inherits the chronicle, and learns exactly the amount of disappointment he felt, and the length of time it took him to get over it; with speculations never coming to an end of what he would have been and how he would have risen had the fates been kind and Mary his. Had he an unjust suspicion of men, such as is often the accompaniment of an overworked brain and a diseased body, the expressions of his sick mood are scattered abroad, even though a better mind withdrew them before death, and there was a full and free reconciliation all round.

Rien n'est sacré pour un sapeur; and nothing is sacred to a biographer of that lower type where the instincts of the jackal and hyæna meet. His article is written in the tears and blood of his dead friend; but what of that? It gives him both *kudos* and money; and some of the glory of the illustrious deceased is reflected on him as the one who, by his own showing, stood nearest to the photosphere, and was most closely enveloped in its rays. In fact, some biographers make it appear that this glory is owing in reality in chief part to them; and that they were the real creators of the reputation which spread so far and rose so high. It was they who farmed out for the world's profit and put to their true uses powers which else would have lain buried in obscurity, like the talent wrapped in the napkin. If they did not positively create the genius which took the generation by storm or held it breathless in delight, which created a new era in literature, and opened a new pathway for science, for

statesmanship, for art, they at least educated, directed, coached, dug out, inspired. If they were not the acorn whence sprang the oak that raised its green glory so high to the heavens, yet they were the mould and the phosphates, the air and the light, by which it gained strength and vitality. Of what use is latent force without the motive power to set it going? Is it not the wheel which gives the diamond its artistic beauty as well as its current commercial value? and where would the island be without the coral insect at its roots? So they spread the varnish of Self over their pages; and what you read is not the real life of the man as he was in his own private identity, or as he appeared to the world at large, but the life of the man according to the asserted manipulation of his biographer—Charles as John made him, Charles as he was to John, Charles as he would have been without John, but most of all, John as he was to Charles, and as he wishes his dear friends and fellow-worshippers to know that he was. May not the slug be proud of the peach, and call the world to witness the splendour of the foothold he has made for himself?

If these are some of the penalties which the illustrious dead have to suffer at the hands of their friends, men who probably did honestly love them, only loving self more, and being men neither in whose character nor whose love exists the faintest line of delicacy, they fare still worse at those of their mere acquaintances. Crowds of these acquaintances start up like gnats in the evening round the grave, and claim as their beloved intimate him who lies dumb and powerless within it—him with whom when living they had never had more than the most passing, most superficial intercourse, and would never have been admitted to more. Fancy conversations spreading over all sorts of important topics are reported as having taken place between them—conversations of the gravest moment built on the slender foundation of a passing half-hour's chat; and the most sensitive and reticent of men—one who did not unbosom himself freely to even his dearest, and who always seemed to hold the key in reserve—is suddenly exhibited as a gushing babbler who gave his confidence unhesitatingly to a chance companion met at a fashionable dinner table, with neither claim nor merit for such distinction. You who were his friend of many years' standing, and whose relations to him were close and real, never heard him utter such an opinion, detail such a fact. Yet it seems to you that he would have surely told you before this would-be Teiresias spying-out the secret doings of the gods, this babbling traitor to the loyalty of trust. Still, you cannot give the lie of which you feel morally so sure, for you cannot prove your negative nor answer the demurrer:—"Is your ignorance to set the measure of my knowledge? If he chose to elect me his confidant rather than you, are you in your right to disclaim his confidences?" You are forced to stand by while the rivulet of untrustworthy revelations pours on, contenting yourself by saying simply:—"I do not believe it. It is unlike my friend, and altogether

out of harmony with his character. To me it is all manifestly false and made up."

You may say this privately, but you cannot prove it publicly; and even if you could, you would not be able to undo the harm already done. The world is too fond of the personal garbage of gossip to willingly relinquish any portion of which it may have got hold: and the coarsest daubs are accepted as life-like portraits by those who never saw the living face and are curious as to its features. It is far easier to create an impression than to undo it when once made, and a distortion need not be wilfully malicious to hurt for all time.

What pain this kind of rude publicity, this gross delineation, this false exaggeration gives those of the more reverent and loyal friends to whom the dead are as sacred as the living, it is impossible to describe. But every man or woman who has known and loved one renowned has to go through the same sad experience when the harpies of memoir and biography settle on the loved remains, and defile what they touch—when the blatant and self-seeking offer sweet sacrifice to themselves, making the dead their victim. But what do these care whether they pain the living or deface the dead? Fiction goes as far as fact in the manufacture of saleable copy, and shoddy is to be found in literature as well as in the loom. The thing cared for and worked for is gain; not the truth or the falsehood by which it is got; and, after all, are we so much worse than our neighbours? we say with indignant self-defence, when some chance Ithuriel pricks us and we are startled at the thing revealed. Do all so-called friendships ring true? are all the jewels offered for the acceptance of the credulous and unwary just as they are made to appear? Seeing that the living can rise up and denounce us if we offend them—can deny our claims to intimacy if made without warrant—can give the lie to our pretended confidences when they travel round to them again in that inevitable circle traced by Nemesis—can say "Depart, for I never knew you," when we go familiarly before them offering our hand—it is safest to take the dead as the foundation whereon to embroider our phantasy of memories. And to make ourselves safe is an instinct given to man for his good, and not to be despised by the grateful believer in Providence. The office of devil's advocate has never been vacant since it was first filled in the apple-tree; and the present generation is not the one to vote it a sinecure.

It seems to me that nothing can be in worse taste than all this wretched half-scandalous, half-indelicate gossip which is made public property so soon as a great man dies; nothing more substantially untrue than the so-called realistic method of giving undue prominence to petty personal frailties and foibles under the plea of candour and telling the whole truth. Just as a photograph where the light has been unskillfully managed is not like the person, because out of drawing and due relation, so the most absolutely exact facts may give a totally false impression because taken without the context and surroundings belonging to them.

No one's character can be subjected to this bald and cruel mapping-out by bits, and retain any sweetness, any harmony. It is not even anatomy; it is mutilation and distortion. But it is the fashion of the present day; and everyone who has a damaging fact, a dwarfing view, an inharmonious rendering to present of a great man lost to us, holds it as a duty he owes to truth and posterity to put it forward with as little delay and scant delicacy as possible—more especially if in putting it forward he drives himself to the front along with it—if, in adding a stone to the cairn, he engraves his own name in bold and showy letters on the one side, scrawling his friend's in wretched pin-pricks on the other. It is the fashion of the present day to extol Boswell without understanding him, and to justify a bad copy by the worth of the original.

As bad in its own way is that fulsome adulation which makes of the dead saints and heroes they never were in life—which praises a wry neck as a grace, and calls a fault by the name of a virtue because *he* possessed it and his name must be kept pure. The morbid sensibility which never rose to healthy self-respect, and was always ashamed of because dominated by circumstance—as if circumstance was greater than character, and the worth of a man's nature consists in what he has about him, and not in what he is—this morbid sensibility is to be praised as an excellent proof of surpassing delicacy. He who would blame it as the sign of that fatal want of moral robustness, that desperate need of masculine self-esteem and self-support by which men are ruined and their manhood betrayed, is scouted as a slanderer, or at best one of those coarse-minded hodmen of the race who know nothing of the lines and tracery of finer architecture. The faithlessness to obligations which galled, and to ties which wearied, was only an allowable exercise of free will in the man of genius who had to care first of all to keep that genius in good working condition, and who was not to be hampered by the petty moralities binding on meaner men. Where a grocer is a scoundrel if he neglects his children or does not pay his bills, a man who makes pretty rhymes and is called a poet, or who paints pretty pictures and is called an artist, may throw his on the chance charity of friends, and forget time and trade in dreams that are more rapturous than profitable. His adulatory biographer will show that his dreams were more to the purpose than another man's work; and that it was better for the world at large that he should give himself to his fancies than to honest methods of earning means whereby to live and pay his way. The grocer and the genius move in different planes of righteousness, and are to be judged by different standards of merit. There is no such thing as a moral absolute, according to the Boswells who pride themselves on the manner in which they carry figs to their patrons; and genius is as an alchemist who can turn base metal into gold and evolve living beauty out of calcined ashes. The common sense of mankind is against them; and virtue, and truth, and loyalty to one's word, and faithfulness to one's engagements—the truth of a man's heart and nature, in fact—are things more precious in

human history than the subtle brain apt at weaving delicate fancies if coupled with the selfish temper which acknowledged no God but self, and overrid every obligation so soon as it became embarrassing.

Thus, between the babblers and the flatterers, the biographers who mark with a broad arrow every secret fault and every private foible, and the adulators who present vices dressed up as virtues and require us to respect what is despicable and love what is abhorrent, the poor dumb dead come to bad passes in these days, and the art of the memoir writer is one which, for the most part, is a curse to the memory of the departed. Sometimes, indeed, we fall upon a delicately touched and subtly suggestive bit of writing, wherein the author's own personality is suppressed, so that no literary or social capital is sought to be made out of the association, where nothing is told that ought to be concealed, nothing glossed over that ought to be condemned, and nothing kept back that the world has the right to know of one of its leaders and foremost citizens.

There are certain facts of a man's life which show his character, and reconcile much that else seems discordant; and others which have nothing of the quality of circumstance about them—which are mere facts self-contained, beginning and ending in themselves, and valuable only on the lowest grounds of gossip and scandal. The true biographer can judge between these two kinds, and the faithful friend knows by intuition which to reject and which to relate. The morality of the man who leaves his wife in favour of a newer love, and condemns because he injures her, is very different from the morality of him who leaves her for incompatibility of temper acknowledged on both sides, and who, though he finds solace in the future, forbears ever to speak bitterly of the past. And the action has to be spoken of differently. In the broad outlines both are the same; in essential qualities they are utterly unlike, and not to be ruled by the same measure. And this may stand as an illustration of more than itself, and of the tact as well as judgment required when dealing with the histories of men—the revelations that must needs be made, and the verdict, from passing which there is no way of escape for him who would be honest and at the same time reverent.

These green spots of love and tact and reverence and truth, all united in the biographical desert, are rare; and few hold the reputation of the dead to be as sacred as that of the living, or regard themselves as trustees of the delicacy they would not have ventured to offend face to face; few, again, standing on the other side of the way, think it needful to make of their hero a fallible man, and to show where the joints in his armour proved him vulnerable and mortal. It is all either the flushing of the sewers and the scraping of the roadway, so that not a fragment should be lost, or else it is running an artificial face of wax over the real features to conceal this homely trait and that unfavourable blemish—the presentation of a colourless ideal as devoid of life-likeness as of beauty. In any case there is vastly too much memoir writing as a rule, and too outrageous an amount of revelation and chatter about the dead. *Mors*

ultima linea rerum est. This was one of the old-time axioms, believed and accepted for the comfort of the wretched. With death came the end of all disaster, and no pursuing Fury could pass the dread portals of the tomb. Had they had the interviewer and memorialist, the man who received his friend at his own board and made private jottings of his sayings—who stored up in his memory what gifts he carried to him when the poor wretch lay sick, and how many journeys he and his made across the square to visit him—who noted his agonies, and gave the public a diagram of his sufferings—who made himself the one gigantic capital *I* in all that passed between them, and placed his "illustrious friend" as a pismire crawling humbly in the shadow thrown by that noble column across their joint track; had they known of flatterers and detractors, flinging, the one his sickly sweets, the other his bitter venom, and both their miserable personalities, into the sacred place of departed souls—they would not have applauded Horace when he wrote that line, and crystallised their simple faith in death as the end of all things. And had he, the poet himself, lived in the nineteenth century, and here, he too would have known that this death does not end all things for man, but that the day after is the one to be most feared; and that even a brave man may shudder when he contemplates the well-known *sequelæ* of his decease—a minute pathological description of his case in a medical journal, for one who was as modest as a maiden; a gossiping memoir in a magazine, when facts are scarce and length remunerative, for one who was reticent and not egotistical; a funeral sermon by a popular preacher, burking both facts and vices under one huge pitchplaster of praise, for him whose God had been himself and whose own will was his own law; maybe a statue in Leicester Square for one well versed in art and sensitive to beauty; or a "national memorial," whereof the committee come to loggerheads at first starting, and no one agrees to anything the other proposes, for the honour and glory of a man as meek as Moses and as shy as a nun.

E. L. L.

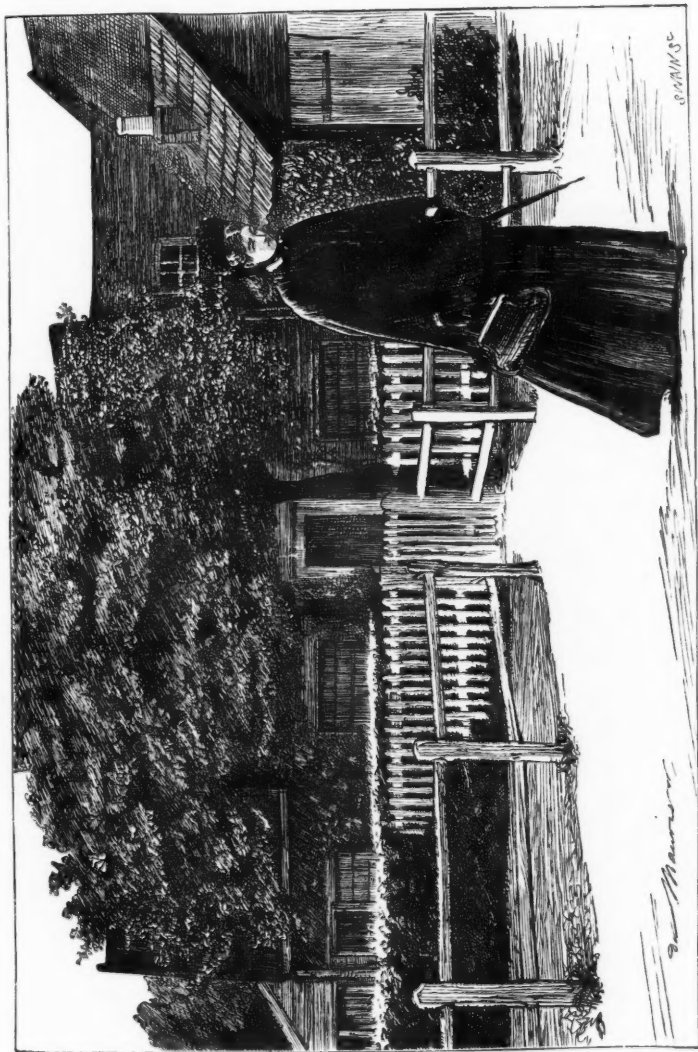
A Rose in June.

CHAPTER XIII.

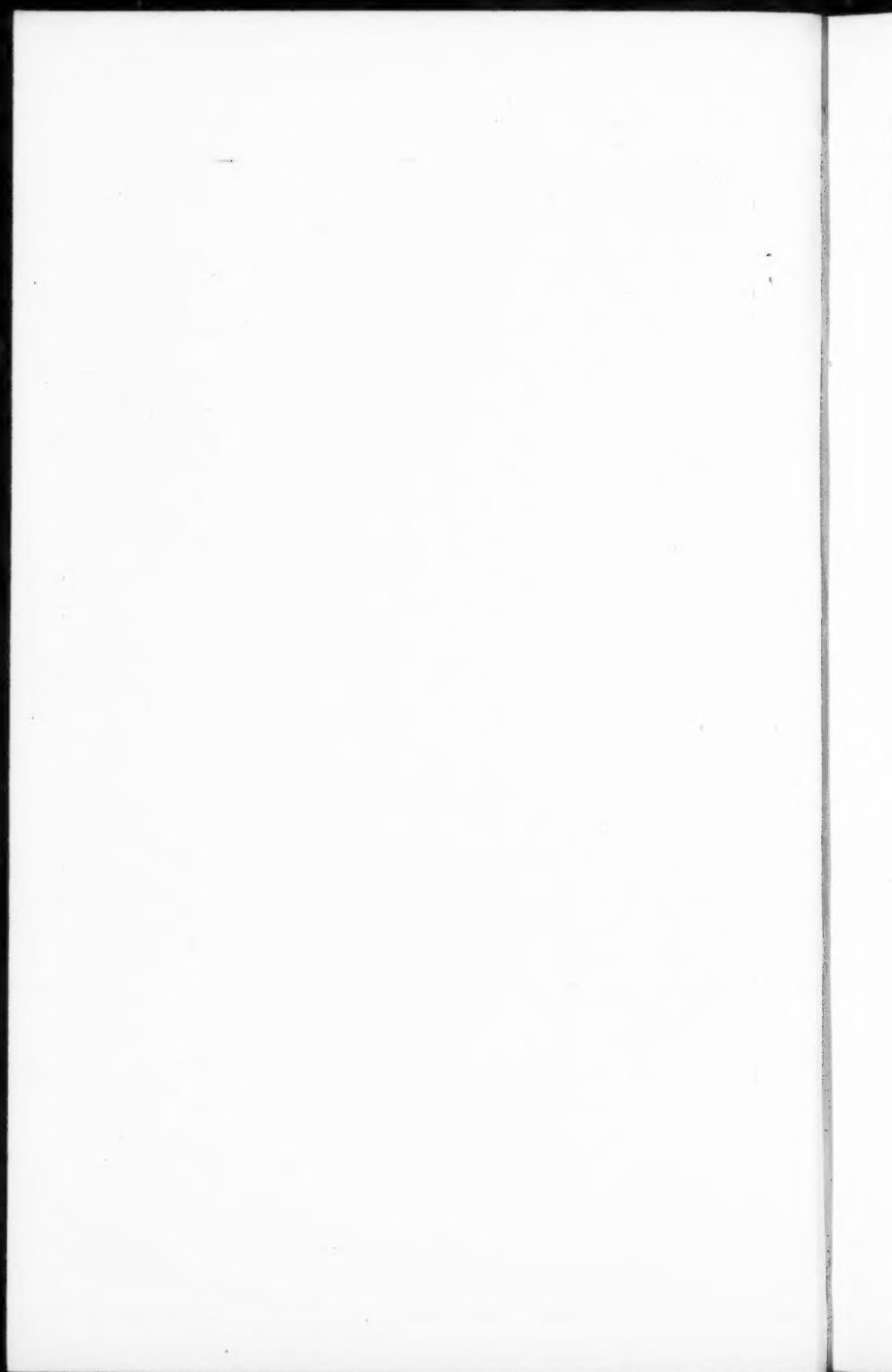


HERE is no such picturesque incident in life as the sudden changes of fortune which make a complete revolution in the fate of families or individuals without either action or merit of their own. That which we are most familiar with is the change from comfort to poverty, which so often takes place, as it had done with

the Damerels, when the head of a house, either incautious or unfortunate, goes out of this world leaving not only sorrow, but misery, behind him, and the bereavement is intensified by social downfall and all the trials that accompany loss of means. But for the prospect of Mr. Incledon's backing up, this would have implied a total change in the prospects and condition of the entire household, for all hope of higher education must have been given up for the boys; they must have dropped into any poor occupation which happened to be within their reach, with gratitude that they were able to maintain themselves; and as for the girls, what could they do, poor children, unless by some lucky chance of marriage? This poor hope would have given them one remaining chance not possible to their brothers; but, except that, what had they all to look forward to? This was Mrs. Damerel's excuse for urging Rose's unwilling consent to Mr. Incledon's proposal. But lo! all this was changed as by a magician's wand. The clouds rolled off the sky, the sunshine came out again, the family recovered its prospects, its hopes, its position, its freedom, and all this in a moment. Mrs. Damerel's old uncle Edward had been an original who had quarrelled with all his family. She had not seen him since she



SHE TOOK HER BAG IN HER HAND AND NOISELESSLY STOLE OUT.



was a child, and none of her children had seen him at all—and she never knew exactly what it was that made him select her for his heir. Probably it was pity; probably admiration for the brave stand she was making against poverty—perhaps only caprice, or because she had never asked anything from him; but, whatever the cause was, there was the happy result. In the evening anxiety, care, discouragement, bitter humiliation, and pain; in the morning sudden ease, comfort, happiness—for, in the absence of anything better, it is a great happiness to have money enough for all your needs, and to be able to give your children what they want, and pay your bills and owe no man anything. In the thought of being rich enough to do all this Mrs. Damerel's heart leapt up in her breast, like the heart of a child. Next moment she remembered, and with a pang of sudden anguish asked herself, oh, why—why had not this come sooner, when *he*, who would have enjoyed it so much, might have had the enjoyment? This feeling sprang up by instinct in her mind, notwithstanding her bitter consciousness of all she had suffered from her husband's carelessness and self-regard—for love is the strangest of all sentiments, and can indulge and condemn in a breath, without any sense of inconsistency. This was the pervading thought in Mrs. Damerel's mind as the news spread through the awakened house, making even the children giddy with hopes of they knew not what. How *he* would have enjoyed it all—the added luxury, the added consequence!—far more than she would enjoy it, notwithstanding that it came to her like life to the dying. She had taken no notice of Rose's exclamation, nor of the flush of joy which the girl betrayed. I am not sure, indeed, that she observed them, being absorbed in her own feelings, which come first even in the most generous minds, at such a crisis and revolution of fate.

As for Rose, it was the very giddiness of delight that she felt, unreasoning and even unfeeling. Her sacrifice had become unnecessary—she was free! So she thought, poor child, with a total indifference to honour and her word, which I do not attempt to excuse. She never once thought of her word, or of the engagement she had come under, or of the man who had been so kind to her, and loved her so faithfully. The children had holiday on that blessed morning, and Rose ran out with them into the garden, and ran wild with pure excess of joy. This was the first day that Mr. Nolan had visited them since he went to his new duties, and as the Curate came into the garden, somewhat tired after a long walk, and expecting to find his friends something as he had left them—if not mourning, yet subdued as true mourners continue after the sharpness of their grief is ended—he was struck with absolute dismay to meet Rose, flushed and joyous, with one of the children mounted on her shoulders, and pursued by the rest, in the highest of high romps, the spring air resounding with their shouts. Rose blushed a little when she saw him. She put down her little brother from her shoulder, and came forward beaming with happiness and kindness.

"Oh, how glad I am that you have come to-day," she said, and explained

forthwith all the circumstances with the frank diffuse explanatoriness of youth. "Now we are rich again; and oh, Mr. Nolan, I am so happy!" she cried, her soft eyes glowing with an excess of light which dazzled the Curate.

People who have never been rich themselves, and never have any chance of being rich, find it difficult sometimes to understand how others are affected in these unwonted circumstances. He was confounded by her frank rapture, the joy which seemed to him so much more than was necessary.

"I'm glad to see you so happy," he said, bewildered; "no doubt money's a blessing, and ye've felt the pinch, my poor child, or ye wouldn't be so full of your joy."

"Oh, Mr. Nolan, how I have felt it!" she said, her eyes filling with tears. A cloud fell over her face for the space of a moment, and then she laughed and cried out joyously, "but thank heaven that is all over now."

Mrs. Damerel was writing in the drawing-room, writing to her boys to tell them the wonderful news. Rose led the visitor in, pushing open the window which opened on the garden. "I have told him all about it, and how happy we are," she said, going up to her mother with all the confidence of happiness, and giving her, with unwonted demonstration, a kiss upon her forehead, before she danced out again to the sunny garden. Mrs. Damerel was a great deal more sober in her exultation, which relieved the Curate. She told him how it had all come about, and what a deliverance it was; then cried a little, having full confidence in his sympathy, over that unremovable regret that it had not come sooner. "How happy it would have made him—and relieved all his anxiety about us," she said. Mr. Nolan made some inarticulate sound, which she took for assent; or, at least, which it pleased her to mistake for assent. In her present mood it was sweet to think that her husband had been anxious, and the Curate knew human nature too well to contradict her. And then she gave him a little history of the past three months during which he had been absent, and of Rose's engagement and all Mr. Incedon's good qualities. "He would have done anything for us," said Mrs. Damerel; "but oh, how glad I am we shall not want anything—only Rose's happiness, which in his hands is secure."

"Mr. Incedon?" said the Curate, with a little wonder in his voice. "Ah, and so that is it. I thought it couldn't be nothing but money that made the child so pleased."

"You thought she looked very happy?" said the mother, with a sudden fright.

"Happy! she looked like her name—nothing is so happy as that but the innocent creatures of God; and sure I did her injustice thinking 'twas the money," the Curate said, with mingled compunction and wonder; for the story altogether sounded very strange to him, and he could not but marvel at the thought that Mr. Incedon's love, once so evidently indifferent to her, should light such lamps of joy now in Rose's eyes.

Mrs. Damerel changed the subject abruptly. A mist of something like care came over her face. "I have had a great deal of trouble and much to think about since I saw you," she said; "but I must not enter upon that now that it is over. Tell me about yourself."

He shrugged his shoulders as he told her how little there was to tell. A new parish, with other poor folk much like those he had left, and other rich folk not far dissimilar—the one knowing as little about the other as the two classes generally do. "That is about all my life is ever likely to be," he said, with a half smile, "between the two, with no great hold on either. I miss Agatha, and Dick, and little Patty—and you to come and talk to most of all," he said, looking at her with an affectionate wistfulness which went to her heart. Not that Mr. Nolan was "in love" with Mrs. Damerel, as vulgar persons would say, laughing; but the loss of her house and society was a great loss to the middle-aged Curate, never likely to have a house of his own.

"We must make it up as much as we can by talking all day long now you are here," she said, with kind smiles; but the Curate, though he was fond of her, was quick to see that she avoided the subject of Mr. Inledon, and was ready to talk of anything rather than that; though, indeed, the first love and first proposed marriage in a family has generally an interest exceeding everything else to the young heroine's immediate friends.

They had the merriest dinner at two o'clock, according to the habit of their humility, with roast mutton, which was the only joint Mary Jane could not spoil; simple fare, which contented the Curate as well as a French chef could have done. He told them funny stories of his new people, at which the children shouted with laughter, and described the musical parties at the vicarage, and the solemn little dinners, and all the dreary entertainments of a small town. The White House had not heard so much innocent laughter, so many pleasant foolish jokes, for years—and I don't think that Rose had ever so distinguished herself in the domestic circle. She had been generally considered too old for fun among the children—too dignified, more on mamma's side—giving herself up to poetry and other such solemn occupations; but to-day the suppressed fountain burst forth. Even Mrs. Damerel did not escape the infection of that laughter which rang like silver bells. The deep mourning they all wore, the poor little rusty black frocks trimmed still with crape, perhaps reproached the laughter now and then; but fathers and mothers cannot expect to be mourned for a whole year, and, indeed, the Rector to these little ones at least had not been much more than a name.

"Rose," said Mrs. Damerel, when the meal was over, and they had returned into the drawing-room, "I think we had better arrange to go up to town one of these days to see about your things. I have been putting off, and putting off, on account of our poverty; but it is full time to think of your trousseau now."

Rose stood still as if she had been suddenly struck by some mortal blow. She looked at her mother with eyes opening wide, lips falling apart, and a

sadden deadly paleness coming over her face. From the fresh sweetness of that rose tint which had come back to her she became all at once ashy-grey, like an old woman. "My—what, mamma?" she faltered, putting her hands upon the table to support herself. "I—did not hear—what you said."

"You'll find me in the garden, ladies, when you want me," said the Curate, with a man's usual cowardice, "bolting," as he himself expressed it, through the open window.

Mrs. Damerel looked up from where she had seated herself at the table, and looked her daughter in the face.

"Your trousseau," she said, calmly, "what else should it be?"

Rose gave a great and sudden cry. "That's all over, mamma, all over, isn't it?" she said eagerly; then hastening round to her mother's side, fell on her knees by her chair, and caught her hand and arm, which she embraced and held close to her breast. "Mamma! speak to me—it's all over—all over! You said the sacrifices we made would be required no longer. It is not needed any more, and it's all over. Oh, say so, with your own lips, mamma!"

"Rose, are you mad?" said her mother, drawing away her hand; "rise up, and do not let me think my child is a fool. Over! is honour over, and the word you have pledged, and the engagement you have made?"

"Honour!" said Rose, with white lips; "but it was for you I did it, and you do not require it any more."

"Rose," cried Mrs. Damerel, "you will drive me distracted. I have often heard that women have no sense of honour, but I did not expect to see it proved in your person. Can you go and tell the man who loves you that you will not marry him because we are no longer beggars? He would have helped us when we were penniless—is that a reason for casting him off now?"

Rose let her mother's hand go, but she remained on her knees by the side of the chair, as if unable to move, looking up in Mrs. Damerel's face with eyes twice their usual size.

"Then am I to be none the better—none the better?" she cried piteously, "are they all to be saved, all rescued, except me?"

"Get up, Rose," said Mrs. Damerel impatiently, "and do not let me hear any more of this folly. Saved! from an excellent man who loves you a great deal better than you deserve—from a lot that a queen might envy—everything that is beautiful and pleasant and good! You are the most ungrateful girl alive, or you would not venture to speak so to me."

Rose did not make any answer. She did not rise, but kept still by her mother's side, as if paralysed. After a moment Mrs. Damerel, in angry impatience, turned from her and resumed her writing, and there the girl continued to kneel, making no movement, heart-stricken, turned into marble. At length, after an interval, she pulled timidly at her mother's dress, looking at her with eyes so full of entreaty, that they forced Mrs. Damerel, against her will, to turn round and meet that pathetic gaze.

"Mamma," she said, under her breath, her voice having failed her, "just one word—is there no hope for me, can you do nothing for me? Oh, have a little pity! You could do something if you would but try."

"Are you mad, child?" cried the mother again—"do something for you? What can I do? You promised to marry him of your own will; you were not forced to do it. You told me you liked him not so long ago. How does this change the matter, except to make you more fit to be his wife? Are you mad?"

"Perhaps," said Rose softly; "if being very miserable is being mad, then I am mad, as you say."

"But you were not very miserable yesterday; you were cheerful enough."

"Oh, mamma, then there was no hope," cried Rose, "I had to do it—there was no help; but now hope has come—and must every one share it, every one get deliverance, but me?"

"Rose," said Mrs. Damerel, "when you are Mr. Incedon's wife every one of these wild words will rise up in your mind and shame you. Why should you make yourself unhappy by constant discussions? you will be sorry enough after for all you have allowed yourself to say. You have promised Mr. Incedon to marry him, and you must marry him. If I had six times Uncle Edward's money it would still be a great match for you."

"Oh, what do I care for a great match!"

"But I do," said Mrs. Damerel, "and whether you care or not has nothing to do with it. You have pledged your word and your honour, and you cannot withdraw from them. Rose, your marriage is fixed for the end of July. We must have no more of this."

"Three months," she said, with a little convulsive shudder. She was thinking that perhaps even yet something might happen to save her in so long a time as three months.

"Not quite three months," said Mrs. Damerel, whose thoughts were running on the many things that had to be done in the interval. "Rose shake off this foolish repining, which is unworthy of you, and go out to good Mr. Nolan, who must be dull with only the children. Talk to him and amuse him till I am ready. I am going to take him up to Whitton to show him the house."

Rose went out without a word; she went and sat down in the little shady summer-house where Mr. Nolan had taken refuge from the sun and from the mirth of the children. He had already seen there was something wrong, and was prepared with his sympathy; whoever was the offender Mr. Nolan was sorry for that one; it was a way he had; his sympathies did not go so much with the immaculate and always virtuous; but he was sorry for whosoever had erred or strayed, and was repenting of the same. Poor Rose—he began to feel himself Rose's champion, because he felt sure that it was Rose, young, thoughtless, and inconsiderate, who must be in the wrong. Rose sat down by his side with a heart-

broken look in her face, but did not say anything. She began to beat with her fingers on the table as if she were beating time to a march. She was still such a child to him, so young, so much like what he remembered her in pinafores that his heart ached for her. "You are in some little bit of trouble?" he said at last.

"Oh, not a little bit," cried Rose, "a great, very great trouble!" She was so full of it that she could not talk of anything else. And the feeling in her mind was that she must speak or die. She began to tell her story in the woody arbour with the gay noise of the children close at hand, but hearing a cry among them that Mr. Incledon was coming, started up and tied on her hat, and seizing Mr. Nolan's arm, dragged him out by the garden door. "I cannot see him to-day!" she cried, and led the Curate away, dragging him after her to a quiet byway over the fields in which she thought they would be safe. Rose had no doubt whatever of the full sympathy of this old friend. She was not afraid even of his disapproval. It seemed certain to her that he must pity at least if not help. And to Rose, in her youthful confidence in others, there was nothing in this world which was unalterable of its nature; no trouble, except death, which could not be got rid of by the intervention of friends.

It chilled her a little, however, as she went on, to see the Curate's face grow longer and longer, graver and graver. "You should not have done it," he said, shaking his head, when Rose told him how she had been brought to give her consent.

"I know I ought not to have done it, but it was not my doing. How could I help myself? And now, oh now, dear Mr. Nolan, tell me what to do! Will *you* speak to mamma? Though she will not listen to me she might hear you."

"But I don't see what your mamma has to do with it," said the Curate. "It is not to her you are engaged—nor is it she who has given her word; you must keep your word, we are all bound to do that."

"But a great many people don't do it," said Rose, driven to the worst of arguments in sheer despair of her cause.

"You must," said Mr. Nolan. "The people who don't are not people to be followed. You have bound yourself and you must stand by it. He is a good man and you must make the best of it. To a great many it would not seem hard at all. You have accepted him, and you must stand by him. I do not see what else can be done now."

"Oh, Mr. Nolan, you speak as if I were married, and there was no hope."

"It is very much the same thing," said the Curate; "you have given your word. Rose, you would not like to be a jilt; you must either keep your word or be called a jilt—and called truly. It is not a pleasant character to have."

"But it would not be true!"

"I think it would be true. Mr. Incledon, poor man, would have good reason to think so. Let us look at it seriously, Rose. What is

there so very bad in it that you should do a good man such an injury? He is not old. He is very agreeable and very rich. He would make you a great lady, Rose."

"Mr. Nolan, do you think I care for that?"

"A great many people care for it, and so do all who belong to you. Your poor father wished it. It had gone out of my mind, but I can recollect very well now; and your mother wishes it—and for you it would be a great thing, you don't know how great. Rose, you must try to put all this reluctance out of your mind, and think only of how many advantages it has."

"I care nothing for the advantages," said Rose, "the only one thing was for the sake of the others. He promised to be good to the boys and to help mamma; and now we don't need his help any more."

"A good reason, an admirable reason," cried the Curate with unwonted sarcasm, "for casting him off now. Few people state it so frankly, but it is the way of the world."

Rose gave him a look so full of wondering that the good man's heart was touched. "Come," he said, "you had made up your mind to it yesterday. It cannot be so very bad after all. At your age nothing can be very bad, for you can always adapt yourself to what is new. So long as there's nobody else in the way that's more to your mind," he said, turning upon her with a penetrating glance.

Rose said nothing in reply. She put up her hands to her face, covering it, and choking the cry which came to her lips. How could she to a man, to one so far separated from love and youth as was Mr. Nolan, make this last confession of all?

The Curate went away that night with a painful impression on his mind. He did not go to Whitton, as Mrs. Damerel had promised, to see Rose's future home, but he saw the master of it, who, disappointed by the headache with which Rose had retreated to her room, on her return from her walk with the Curate, did not show in his best aspect. None of the party indeed did; perhaps the excitement and commotion of the news had produced a bad result—for nothing could be flatter or more deadly than the evening which followed. Even the children were cross and peevish and had to be sent to bed in disgrace; and Rose had hidden herself in her room, and lines of care and irritation were on Mrs. Damerel's forehead. The great good fortune which had befallen them did not, for the moment at least, bring happiness in its train.

CHAPTER XIV.

Rose did not go downstairs that night. She had a headache, which is the prescriptive right of a woman in trouble. She took the cup of tea which Agatha brought her, at the door of her room, and begged that

mamma would not trouble to come to see her, as she was going to bed. She was afraid of another discussion, and shrank even from seeing anyone. She had passed through a great many different moods of mind in respect to Mr. Incledon, but this one was different from all the rest. All the softening of feeling of which she had been conscious died out of her mind; his very name became intolerable to her. That which she had proposed to do, as the last sacrifice a girl could make for her family, an absolute renunciation of self and voluntary martyrdom for them, changed its character altogether when they no longer required it. Why should she do what was worse than death, when the object for which she was willing to die was no longer before her; when there was, indeed, no need for doing it at all? Would Iphigenia have died for her word's sake, had there been no need for her sacrifice? and why should Rose do more than she? In this there was, the reader will perceive, a certain change of sentiment; for though Rose had made up her mind sadly and reluctantly to marry Mr. Incledon, yet she had not thought the alternative worse than death. She had felt while she did it the ennobling sense of having given up her own will to make others happy, and had even recognised the far-off and faint possibility that the happiness which she thus gave to others might, some time or other, rebound upon herself. But the moment her great inducement was removed, a flood of different sentiment came in. She began to hate Mr. Incledon, to feel that he had taken advantage of her circumstances, that her mother had taken advantage of her, that everyone had used her as a tool to promote their own purpose, with no more consideration for her than had she been altogether without feeling. This thought went through her mind like a hot breath from a furnace, searing and scorching everything. And now that their purpose was served without her, she must still make this sacrifice—for honour! For honour! Perhaps it is true that women hold this motive more lightly than men, though indeed the honour that is involved in a promise of marriage does not seem to influence either sex very deeply in ordinary cases. I am afraid poor Rose did not feel its weight at all. She might be forced to keep her word, but her whole soul revolted against it. She had ceased to be sad and resigned. She was rebellious and indignant, and a hundred wild schemes and notions began to flit through her mind. To jump in such a crisis as this from the tender resignation of a martyr for love into the bitter and painful resistance of a domestic rebel who feels that no one loves her, is easy to the young mind in the unreality which more or less envelopes everything to youth. From the one to the other was but a step. Yesterday she had been the centre of all the family plans, the foundation of comfort, the chief object of their thoughts. Now she was in reality only Rose the eldest daughter, who was about to make a brilliant marriage, and therefore was much in the foreground, but no more loved or noticed than anyone else. In reality this change had actually come, but she imagined a still greater change; and fancy showed her to herself as the rebellious daughter, the one who had never fully done her duty, never been quite in sym-

pathy with her mother, and whom all would be glad to get rid of, in marriage or any other way, as interfering with the harmony of the house. Such of us as have been young may remember how easy these revolutions of feeling were, and with what quick facility we could identify ourselves as almost adored or almost hated, as the foremost object of everybody's regard or an intruder in everybody's way. Rose passed a very miserable night, and the next day was, I think, more miserable still. Mrs. Damerel did not say a word to her on the subject which filled her thoughts, but told her that she had decided to go to London in the beginning of the next week, to look after the "things" which were necessary. As they were in mourning already, there was no more trouble of that description necessary on Uncle Edward's account, but only new congratulations to receive, which poured in on every side.

"I need not go through the form of condoling, for I know you did not have much intercourse with him, poor old gentleman," one lady said; and another caught Rose by both hands and exclaimed on the good luck of the family in general.

"Blessings, like troubles, never come alone," she said. "To think you should have a fortune tumbling down upon you on one side, and on the other this chit of a girl carrying off the best match in the county!"

"I hope we are sufficiently grateful for all the good things Providence sends us," said Mrs. Damerel, fixing her eyes severely upon Rose.

Oh, if she had but had the courage to take up the glove thus thrown down to her! But she was not yet screwed up to that desperate pitch.

Mr. Incedon came later, and in his joy at seeing her was more lover-like than he had yet permitted himself to be.

"Why I have not seen you since this good news came!" he cried, fondly kissing her in his delight and heartiness of congratulation, a thing he had never done before. Rose broke from him and rushed out of the room, white with fright and resentment.

"Oh, how dared he! how dared he!" she cried, rubbing the spot upon her cheek which his lips had touched with wild exaggeration of dismay.

And how angry Mrs. Damerel was! She went upstairs after the girl, and spoke to her as Rose had never yet been spoken to in all her soft life—upbraiding her with her heartlessness, her disregard of other people's feelings, her indifference to her own honour and plighted word. Once more Rose remained upstairs, refusing to come down, and the house was aghast at the first quarrel which had ever disturbed its decorum.

Mr. Incedon went away bewildered and unhappy, not knowing whether to believe that this was a mere ebullition of temper, such as Rose had never shown before, which would have been a venial offence, rather amusing than otherwise to his indulgent fondness; or whether it meant something more, some surging upwards of the old reluctance to accept him, which he had believed himself to have overcome. This doubt chilled him to the heart, and gave him much to think of as he took his somewhat dreary walk

home—for failure, after there has been an appearance of success, is more discouraging still than when there has been no opening at all in the clouded skies. And Agatha knocked at Rose's locked door, and bade her good-night through the keyhole with a mixture of horror and respect—horror for the wickedness, yet veneration for the courage which could venture thus to beard all constituted authorities. Mrs. Damerel herself said no good-night to the rebel. She passed Rose's door steadily without allowing herself to be led away by the impulse which tugged at her heart to go in and give the kiss of grace, notwithstanding the impenitent condition of the offender. Had the mother done this, I think all that followed might have been averted, and that Mrs. Damerel would have been able eventually to carry out her programme and arrange the girl's life as she wished. But she thought it right to show her displeasure, though her heart almost failed her.

Rose had shut herself up in wild misery and passion. She had declared to herself that she wanted to see no one; that she would not open her door, nor subject herself over again to such reproaches as had been poured upon her. But yet when she heard her mother pass without even a word, all the springs of the girl's being seemed to stand still. She could not believe it. Never before in all her life had such a terrible occurrence taken place. Last night, when she had gone to bed to escape remark, Mrs. Damerel had come in ere she went to her own room and asked after the pretended headache, and kissed her, and bade her keep quite still and be better to-morrow. Rose got up from where she was sitting, expecting her mother's appeal and intending to resist, and went to the door and put her ear against it and listened. All was quiet. Mrs. Damerel had gone steadily along the corridor, had entered the rooms of the other children, and now shut her own door—sure signal that the day was over. When this inexorable sound met her ears, Rose crept back again to her seat and wept bitterly, with an aching and vacancy in her heart which it is beyond words to tell. It seemed to her that she was abandoned, cut off from the family love, thrown aside like a waif and stray, and that things would never be again as they had been. This terrible conclusion always comes in to aggravate the miseries of girls and boys. Things could never mend, never again be as they had been. She cried till she exhausted herself, till her head ached in dire reality, and she was sick and faint with misery and the sense of desolation; and then wild schemes and fancies came into her mind. She could not bear it—scarcely for those dark helpless hours of the night could she bear it—but must be still till daylight; then, poor forlorn child, cast off by everyone, abandoned even by her mother, with no hope before her but this marriage, which she hated, and no prospect but wretchedness—then she made up her mind she would go away. She took out her little purse and found a few shillings in it, sufficient to carry her to the refuge which she had suddenly thought of. I think she would have liked to fly out of sight and ken and hide herself for ever, or at least until all who had been unkind to

her had broken their hearts about her, as she had read in novels of unhappy heroines doing. But she was too timid to take such a daring step, and she had no money, except the ten shillings in her poor little pretty purse, which was not meant to hold much. When she had made up her mind, as she thought, or to speak more truly, when she had been quite taken possession of by this wild purpose, she put a few necessities into a bag to be ready for her flight, taking her little prayer-book last of all, which she kissed and cried over with a heart wrung with many pangs. Her father had given it her on the day she was nineteen—not a year since. Ah, why was not she with him, who always understood her, or why was not he here? He would never have driven her to such a step as this. He was kind, whatever anyone might say of him. If he neglected some things, he was never hard upon anyone—at least, never hard upon Rose—and he would have understood her now. With an anguish of sudden sorrow, mingled with all the previous misery in her heart, she kissed the little book and put it into her bag. Poor child! it was well for her that her imagination had that sad asylum at least to take refuge in, and that the Rector had not lived long enough to show how hard in worldliness a soft and self-indulgent man can be.

Rose did not go to bed. She had a short, uneasy sleep, against her will, in her chair—dropping into constrained and feverish slumber for an hour or so in the dead of the night. When she woke the dawn was blue in the window, making the branches of the honeysuckle visible through the narrow panes. There was no sound in heaven or earth except the birds chirping, but the world seemed full of that; for all the domestic chat has to be got over in all the nests before men awake and drown the delicious babble in harsher commotions of their own. Rose got up and bathed her pale face and red eyes, and put on her hat. She was cold, and glad to draw a shawl round her and get some consolation and strength from its warmth; and then she took her bag in her hand, and opening her door, noiselessly stole out. There was a very early train which passed the Dingle station, two miles from Dinglefield, at about five o'clock, on its way to London; and Rose hoped, by being in time for that, to escape all pursuit. How strange it was going out like a thief into the house, all still and shut up, with its windows closely barred, the shutters up, and a still, unnatural half-light gleaming in through the crevices! As she stole downstairs her very breathing, the sound of her own steps, frightened Rose; and when she looked in at the open door of the drawing-room and saw all the traces of last night's peaceful occupations, a strange feeling that all the rest were dead and she a fugitive stealing guiltily away, came on her so strongly that she could scarcely convince herself it was not true. It was like the half-light that had been in all the rooms when her father lay dead in the house, and made her shiver. Feeling more and more like a thief, she opened the fastenings of the hall door, which were rusty and gave her some trouble. It was difficult to open them, still more difficult to close

it softly without alarming the house ; and this occupied her mind, so that she made the last step almost without thinking what she was doing. When she had succeeded in shutting the door, then it suddenly flashed upon her, rushed upon her like a flood—the consciousness of what she had done. She had left home, and all help and love and protection ; and—heaven help her—here she was out of doors in the open-eyed day, which looked at her with a severe, pale calm—desolate and alone ! She held by the pillars of the porch to support her for one dizzy, bewildered moment ; but now was not the time to break down or let her terrors, her feelings overcome her. She had taken the decisive step and must go on now.

Mrs. Damerel, disturbed perhaps by the sound of the closing door, though she did not make out what it was, got up and looked out from the window in the early morning, and, at the end of the road which led to the Green, saw a solitary figure walking, which reminded her of Rose. She had half-forgotten Rose's perverseness, in her sleep, and I think the first thing that came into her mind had been rather the great deliverance sent to her in the shape of Uncle Edward's fortune, than the naughtiness—though it was almost too serious to be called naughtiness—of her child. And though it struck her for the moment with some surprise to see the slim young figure on the road so early, and a passing notion crossed her mind that something in the walk and outline was like Rose, yet it never occurred to her to connect that unusual appearance with her daughter. She lay down again when she had opened the window with a little half-wish, half-prayer that Rose might "come to her senses" speedily. It was too early to get up, and though Mrs. Damerel could not sleep, she had plenty to think about, and this morning leisure was the best time for it. Rose prevailed largely among her subjects of thought, but did not fill her whole mind. She had so many other children, and so much to consider about them all !

Meanwhile Rose went on to the station, like a creature in a dream, feeling the very trees, the very birds watch her, and wondering that no faces peeped at her from the curtained cottage windows. How strange to think that all the people were asleep, while she walked along through the dreamy world, her footsteps filling it with strange echoes ! How fast and soundly it slept, that world, though all the things out-of-doors were in full movement, interchanging their opinions, and taking council upon all their affairs ! She had never been out, and had not very often been awake, at such an early hour, and the stillness from all human sounds and voices, combined with the wonderful fullness of the language of Nature, gave her a strange bewildered feeling, like that a traveller might have in some strange star or planet peopled with beings different from man. It seemed as if all the human inhabitants had resigned, and given up their places to another species. The fresh air which blew in her face, and the cheerful stir of the birds, recovered her a little from the fright with which she felt herself alone in that changed universe—and the

sight of the first wayfarer making his way, like herself, towards the station, gave her a thrill of pain, reminding her that she was neither walking in a dream nor in another planet, but on the old-fashioned earth, dominated by men, and where she shrank from being seen or recognised. She put her veil down over her face as she stole in, once more feeling like a thief, at the wooden gate. Two or three people only, all of the working class, were kicking their heels on the little platform. Rose took her ticket with much trepidation, and stole into the quietest corner to await the arrival of the train. It came up at last with a great commotion, the one porter rushing to open the door of a carriage, out of which Rose perceived quickly, a gentleman jumped, giving directions about some luggage. An arrival was a very rare event at so early an hour in the morning. Rose went forward timidly with her veil over her face to creep into the carriage which this traveller had vacated, and which seemed the only empty one. She had not looked at him, nor had she any curiosity about him. The porter, busy with the luggage, paid no attention to her, for which she was thankful, and she thought she was getting away quite unobserved, which gave her a little comfort. She had her foot on the step, and her hand on the carriage door, to get in.

"Miss Damerel!" cried an astonished voice close by her ear.

Rose's foot failed on the step. She almost fell with the start she gave. Whose voice was it? a voice she knew—a voice somehow that went to her heart; but in the first shock she did not ask herself any questions about it, but felt only the distress and terror of being recognised. Then she decided that it was her best policy to steal into the carriage to escape questions. She did so, trembling with fright; but as she sat down in the corner, turned her face unwittingly towards the person, whoever it was, who had recognised her. He had left his luggage, and was gazing at her with his hand on the door. His face, all flushed with delight, gleamed upon her like sudden sunshine. "Miss Damerel!" he cried again, "you here at this hour?"

"Oh, hush! hush!" she cried, putting up her hand with instinctive warning. "I—don't want to be seen."

I am not sure that she knew him at the first glance. Poor child, her heart was too deeply pre-occupied to do more than flutter feebly at the sight of him, and no secondary thought as to how he had come here, or what unlooked-for circumstance had brought him back, was within the range of her intelligence. Edward Wodehouse made no more than a momentary pause ere he decided what to do. He slipped a coin into the porter's ready hand, and gave him directions about his luggage. "Keep it safe till I return; don't send it home. I am obliged to go to town for an hour or two," he said, and sprang again into the carriage he had just left. His heart was beating with no feeble flutter. He had the promptitude of a man who knows that no opportunity ought to be neglected. The door closed upon them with that familiar bang which we all know so well; the engine shrieked, the wheels jarred, and Rose Damerel and

Edward Wodehouse—two people whom even the Imperial Government of England had been moved to separate—moved away into the distance, as if they had eloped with each other, sitting face to face.

Her heart fluttered feebly enough—his heart as strong as the pulsations of the steam-engine, and he thought almost as audible; but the first moment was one of embarrassment. "I cannot get over the wonder of this meeting," he said. "Miss Damerel, what happy chance takes you to London this morning of all others? Some fairy must have done it for me?"

"No happy chance at all," said Rose, shivering with painful emotion, and drawing her shawl closer round her. What could she say to him?—but she began to realise that it was *him*, which was the strangest bewildering sensation. As for him, knowing of no mystery and no misery, the tender sympathy in his face grew deeper and deeper. Could it be poverty? could she be going to work like any other poor girl? A great throb of love and pity went through the young man's heart.

"Don't be angry with me," he said; "but I cannot see you here, alone and looking sad—and take no interest. Can you tell me what it is? Can you make any use of me? Miss Damerel, don't you know there is nothing in the world that would make me so happy as to be of service to you?"

"Have you just come home?" she asked.

"This morning; I was on my way from Portsmouth. And you—won't you tell me something about yourself?"

Rose made a tremendous effort to go back to the ordinary regions of talk; and then she recollected all that had happened since he had been away. "You know that papa died," she said, the tears springing to her eyes with an effort of nature which relieved her brain and heart.

"I heard that: I was very, very sorry."

"And then for a time we were very poor; but now we are well off again by the death of mamma's uncle Edward; that is all, I think," she said, with an attempt at a smile.

Then there was a pause. How was he to subject her to a cross-examination? and yet Edward felt that, unless something had gone very wrong, the girl would not have been here.

"You are going to town?" he said. "It is very early for you; and alone?—"

"I do not mind," said Rose; and then she added quickly, "When you go back, will you please not say you have seen me? I don't want any one to know."

"Miss Damerel, something has happened to make you unhappy?"

"Yes," she said, "but never mind. It does not matter much to any one but me. Your mother is very well. Did she know that you were coming home?"

"No, it is quite sudden. I am promoted by the help of some kind

unknown friend or another, and they could not refuse me a few days leave ——."

"Mrs. Wodehouse will be very glad," said Rose. She seemed to rouse out of her preoccupation to speak to him, and then fell back. The young sailor was at his wits end. What a strange coming home it was to him! He had dreamt of his first meeting with Rose in a hundred different ways, and rehearsed it, and all that he would say to her; but such a wonderful meeting as this had never occurred to him; and to have her entirely to himself, yet not to know what to say!

"There must be changes since I left. It will soon be a year ago," he said, in sheer despair.

"I do not remember any changes," said Rose, "except the rectory. We are in the White House now. Nothing else has happened that I know—yet."

This little word made his blood run cold—*yet*. Did it mean that something was about to happen? He tried to overcome that impression by a return to the ground he was sure of. "May I speak of last year?" he said. "I went away very wretched—as wretched as any man could be."

Rose was too far gone to think of the precautions with which such a conversation ought to be conducted. She knew what he meant, and why should she pretend she did not? Not that this reflection passed through her mind, which acted totally upon impulse, without any reflection at all.

"It was not my fault," she said, simply. "I was alone with papa, and he would not let me go."

"Ah!" he said, his eyes lighting up; "you did not think me presumptuous, then? you did not mean to crush me? Oh! if you knew how I have thought of it, and questioned myself! It has never been out of my mind for a day—for an hour——"

She put up her hand hastily. "I may be doing wrong," she said, "but it would be more wrong still to let you speak. They would think it was for this I came away."

"What is it? what is it?" he said; "something has happened. Why may not I tell you, when I have at last this blessed opportunity? Why is it wrong to let me speak?"

"They will think it was for this I came away," said Rose. "Oh! Mr. Wodehouse, you should not have come with me. They will say I knew you were to be here. Even mamma, perhaps, will think so, for she does not think well of me, as papa used to do. She thinks I am selfish, and care only for my own pleasure," said Rose with tears.

"You have come away without her knowledge?"

"Yes."

"Then you are escaping from some one?" said Wodehouse, his face flushing over.

"Yes! yes."

"Miss Damerel, come back with me. Nobody, I am sure, will force

you to do anything. Your mother is too good to be unkind. Will you come back with me? Ah, you must not—you must not throw yourself upon the world; you do not know what it is," said the young sailor, taking her hand, in his earnestness. "Rose—dear Rose—let me take you back."

She drew her hand away from him, and dried the hot tears which scorched her eyes. "No, no," she said. "You do not know, and I want nobody to know. You will not tell your mother, nor any one. Let me go, and let no one think of me any more."

"As if that were possible!" he cried.

"Oh, yes, it is possible. I loved papa dearly; but I seldom think of him now. If I could die you would all forget me in a year. To be sure I cannot die; and even if I did, people might say that was selfish too. Yes, you don't know what things mamma says. I have heard her speak as if it were selfish to die,—escaping from one's duties; and I am escaping from my duties; but it can never, never be a duty to marry when you cannot —. What am I saying?" said poor Rose. "My head is quite light, and I think I must be going crazy. You must not mind what I say."

CHAPTER XV.

EDWARD WODEHOUSE reached Dinglefield about eleven o'clock, coming back from that strange visit to town. He felt it necessary to go to the White House before even he went to his mother, but he was so cowardly as to go round a long way so as to avoid crossing the Green, or exhibiting himself to public gaze. He felt that his mother would never forgive him did she know that he had gone anywhere else before going to her, and, indeed, I think Mrs. Wodehouse's feeling was very natural. He put his hat well over his eyes, but he did not, as may be supposed, escape recognition—and went on with a conviction that the news of his arrival would reach his mother before he did, and that he would have something far from delightful to meet with when he went home.

As for Mrs. Damerel, when she woke up in the morning to the fact that Rose was gone, her first feelings, I think, were more those of anger than of alarm. She was not afraid that her daughter had committed suicide, or run away permanently; for she was very reasonable, and her mind fixed upon the probabilities of a situation rather than on the violent catastrophes which might be possible. It was Agatha who first brought her the news open-mouthed, and shouting the information, "Oh mamma, come here, come here, Rose has run away!" so that everyone in the house could hear.

"Nonsense, child! she has gone—to do something for me," said the mother on the spur of the moment, prompt to save exposure even at the instant when she received the shock.

"But mamma," cried Agatha, "her bed has not been slept in, her things are gone—her——"

Here Mrs. Damerel put her hand over the girl's mouth, and with a look she never forgot, went with her into the empty nest, from which the bird had flown. All Mrs. Damerel's wits rallied to her on the moment to save the scandal which was inevitable if this were known. "Shut the door," she said, in a low quiet voice. "Rose is very foolish: because she thinks she has quarrelled with me, to make such a show of her undutifulness! She has gone up to town by the early train."

"Then you knew!" cried Agatha, with eyes as wide open as just now her mouth had been.

"Do you think it likely she would go without my knowing?" said her mother; an unanswerable question, for which Agatha, though her reason discovered the imposture, could find no ready response. She looked on with wonder while her mother, with her own hands, tossed the coverings off the little white bed, and gave it the air of having been slept in. It was Agatha's first lesson in the art of making things appear as they are not.

"Rose has been foolish; but I don't choose that Mary Jane should make a talk about it, and tell everybody that she did not go to bed last night like a Christian—and do you hold your tongue," said Mrs. Damerel.

Agatha followed her mother's directions with awe, and was subdued all day by a sense of the mystery; for why, if mamma knew all about it, and it was quite an ordinary proceeding, should Rose have gone to town by the early train?

Mrs. Damerel, however, had no easy task to get calmly through the breakfast, and arrange her household matters for the day, with this question perpetually recurring to her, with sharp thrills and shoots of pain—Where was Rose? She had been angry at first, deeply annoyed and vexed, but now other feelings struck in. An anxiety, which did not suggest any definite danger, but was dully and persistently present in her mind, like something hanging over her, took possession of her whole being. Where had she gone? What could she be doing at that moment? What steps could her mother take to find out, without exposing her foolishness to public gaze? How should she satisfy Mr. Incedon? how conceal this strange disappearance from her neighbours. They all took, what people are pleased to call "a deep interest" in Rose, and, indeed, in all the late Rector's family; and Mrs. Damerel knew the world well enough to be aware that the things which one wishes to be kept secret, are just those which everybody manages to hear. She forgot even to be angry with Rose in the deep necessity of concealing the extraordinary step she had taken; a step enough to lay a young girl under an enduring stigma all her life; and what could she do to find her without betraying her? She could not even make an inquiry without risking this betrayal. She could not ask a passenger on the road, or a porter at the station, if they

had seen her, lest she should thereby make it known that Rose's departure had been clandestine. All through the early morning, while she was busy with the children and the affairs of the house, this problem was working in her mind. Of all things this was the most important, not to compromise Rose, or to let anyone know what a cruel and unkind step she had taken. Mrs. Damerel knew well how such a stigma clings to a girl, and how ready the world is to impute other motives than the real one. Perhaps she had been hard upon her child, and pressed a hateful sacrifice upon her unduly, but now Rose's credit was the first thing she thought of. She would not even attempt to get relief to her own anxiety at the cost of any animadversion upon Rose; or suffer anybody to suspect her daughter in order to ease herself. This necessity made her position doubly difficult and painful, for, without compromising Rose, she did not know how to inquire into her disappearance or what to do; and, as the moments passed over with this perpetual undercurrent going on in her mind, the sense of painful anxiety grew stronger and stronger. Where could she have gone? She had left no note, no letter behind her, as runaways are generally supposed to do. She had, her mother knew, only a few shillings in her purse; she had no relations at hand with whom she could find refuge. Where had she gone? Every minute this question pressed more heavily upon her, and sounded louder and louder. Could she go on shutting it up in her mind, taking council of no one? Mrs. Damerel felt this to be impossible, and after breakfast sent a telegram to Mr. Nolan, begging him to come to her "on urgent business." She felt sure that Rose had confided some of her troubles at least to him; and he was a friend upon whose help and secrecy she could fully rely.

Her mind was in this state of intense inward perturbation and outward calm, when, standing at her bedroom window, which commanded the road and a corner of the Green, upon which the road opened, she saw Edward Wodehouse coming towards the house. I suppose there was never anyone yet in great anxiety and suspense, who did not go to the window with some sort of forlorn hope of seeing something to relieve them. She recognised the young man at once, though she did not know of his arrival, or even that he was looked for; and the moment she saw him instantly gave him a place—though she could not tell what place—in the maze of her thoughts. Her heart leaped up at sight of him, though he might be but walking past, he might be but coming to pay an ordinary call on his return, for anything she knew. Instinctively, her heart associated him with her child. She watched him come in through the little shrubbery, scarcely knowing where she stood, so intense was her suspense; then went down to meet him, looking calm and cold, as if no anxiety had ever clouded her firmament. "How do you do, Mr. Wodehouse; I did not know you had come back," she said, with perfect composure, as if he had been the most everyday acquaintance, and she had parted from him last night.

He looked at her with a countenance much paler and more agitated than her own, and, with that uneasy air of deprecation natural to a man who has a confession to make. "No one did; or, indeed, does," he said, "not even my mother. I got my promotion quite suddenly, and insisted upon a few days' leave to see my friends before I joined my ship."

"I congratulate you," said Mrs. Damerel, putting heroic force upon herself. "I suppose, then, I should have said Captain Wodehouse? How pleased your mother will be!"

"Yes," he said, abstractedly. "I should not, as you may suppose, have taken the liberty to come here so early merely to tell you a piece of news concerning myself. I came up from Portsmouth during the night, and when the train stopped at this station—by accident—Miss Damerel got into the same carriage in which I was. She charged me with this note to give to you."

There was a sensation in Mrs. Damerel's ears as if some sluice had given way in the secrecy of her heart, and the blood was surging and swelling upwards. But she managed to smile a ghastly smile at him, and to take the note without further display of her feelings. It was a little twisted note written in pencil, which Wodehouse, indeed, had with much trouble, persuaded Rose to write. Her mother opened it with fingers trembling so much that the undoing of the scrap of paper was a positive labour to her. She dropped softly into a chair, however, with a great and instantaneous sense of relief, the moment she had read these few pencilled words:—

"Mamma, I have gone to Miss Margetts. I am very wretched, and don't know what to do. I could not stay at home any longer. Do not be angry. I think my heart will break."

Mrs. Damerel did not notice these pathetic words. She saw "Miss Margetts," and that was enough for her. Her blood resumed its usual current, her heart began to beat less violently. She felt, as she leant back in her chair, exhausted and weak with the agitation of the morning; weak as one only feels when the immediate pressure is over. Miss Margetts was the schoolmistress with whom Rose had received her education. No harm to Rose, nor her reputation, could come did all the world know that she was there. She was so much and instantaneously relieved, that her watchfulness over herself intermitted, and she did not speak for a minute or two. She roused herself up with a little start when she caught Wodehouse's eye gravely fixed upon her.

"Thanks," she said; "I am very glad to have this little note, telling me of Rose's safe arrival with her friends in London. It was very good of you to bring it. I do not know what put it into the child's head to go by that early train."

"Whatever it was, it was very fortunate for me," said Edward. "As we had met by such a strange chance, I took the liberty of seeing her safe to Miss Margetts' house."

"You are very good," said Mrs. Damerel; "I am much obliged to you;" and then the two were silent for a moment, eyeing each other like wrestlers before they close.

"Mrs. Damerel," said young Wodehouse, faltering, and brave sailor as he was, feeling more frightened than he could have said, "there is something more which I ought to tell you. Meeting her so suddenly, and remembering how I had been balked in seeing her before I left Dinglefield, I was overcome by my feelings, and ventured to tell Miss Damerel——"

"Mr. Wodehouse, my daughter is engaged to be married!" cried Mrs. Damerel, with sharp and sudden alarm.

"But not altogether—with her own will," he said.

"You must be mistaken," said the mother, with a gasp for breath. "Rose is foolish, and changes with every wind that blows. She cannot have intended to leave any such impression on your mind. It is the result, I suppose, of some lovers' quarrel. As this is the case, I need not say that though, under any other circumstances, I should deeply have felt the honour you do her, yet, in the present, the only thing I can do is to say good morning and many thanks. Have you really not seen your mother yet?"

"Not yet. I am going——"

"Oh go, please, go!" said Mrs. Damerel. "It was extremely kind of you to bring the note before going home, but your mother would never forgive me if I detained you; good-bye. If you are here for a few days I may hope to see you before you go."

With these words she accompanied him to the door, smiling cordially as she dismissed him. He could neither protest against the dismissal nor linger in spite of it, to repeat the love-tale which she had stopped on his lips. Her apparent calm had almost deceived him, and but for a little quiver of her shadow upon the wall, a little clasping together of her hands, with Rose's letter in them, which nothing but the keenest observation could have detected, he could almost have believed in his bewilderment that Rose had been dreaming, and that her mother was quite cognizant of her flight, and knew where she was going and all about it. But, however that might be, he had to go, in a very painful maze of thought, not knowing what to think or to hope about Rose, and having a whimsical certainty of what must be awaiting him at home, had his mother heard, as was most likely, of his arrival, and that he had gone first to the White House. Fortunately for him, Mrs. Wodehouse had not heard it; but she poured into his reluctant ears the whole story of Mr. Incedon and the engagement, and of all the wonders with which he was filling Whitton in preparation for his bride.

"Though I think she treated you very badly, after encouraging you as she did, and leading you on to the very edge of a proposal—yet one can't but feel that she is a very lucky girl," said Mrs. Wodehouse. "I hope

you will take care not to throw yourself in their way, my dear; though, perhaps, on the whole, it would be best to show that you have got over it entirely and don't mind who she marries. A little insignificant chit of a girl not worth your notice. There are as good fish in the sea, Edward—or better, for that matter."

"Perhaps you are right, mother," he said, glad to escape from the subject; and then he told her the mystery of his sudden promotion, and how he had struggled to get this fortnight's leave before joining his ship, which was in commission for China. Mrs. Wodehouse fatigued her brain with efforts to discover who it could be who had thus mysteriously befriended her boy; and as this subject drew her mind from the other, Edward was thankful enough to listen to her suggestions of this man who was dead, and that man who was at the end of the world. He had not an idea himself who it could be, and, I think, cherished a furtive hope that it was his good service which had attracted the notice of my Lords; for young men are easily subject to this kind of illusion. But his mind, it may be supposed, was sufficiently disturbed without any question of the kind. He had to reconcile Rose's evident misery in her flight, with her mother's calm acceptance of it as a thing she knew of; and to draw a painful balance between Mrs. Damerel's power to insist and command, and Rose's power of resistance; finally, he had the despairing consciousness that his leave was only for a fortnight, a period too short for anything to be decided on. No hurried settlement of the extraordinary imbroglio of affairs which he perceived dimly—no licence, however special, would make it possible to secure Rose in a fortnight's time; and he was bound to China for three years! This reflection, you may well suppose, gave the young man enough to think of, and made his first day at home anything but the ecstatic holiday which a first day at home ought to be.

As for Mrs. Damerel, when she went into her own house, after seeing this dangerous intruder to the door, the sense of relief which had been her only conscious feeling up to this moment, gave place to the irritation and repressed wrath which, I think, was very natural. She said to herself, bitterly, that as the father had been so the daughter was. They consulted their own happiness, their own feelings, and left her to make everything straight behind them. What did it matter what she felt? What was the good of her but to bear the burden of their self-indulgence?—to make up for the wrongs they did, and conceal the scandal? I am aware that in such a case, as in almost all others, the general sympathy goes with the young; but yet I think poor Mrs. Damerel had much justification for the bitterness in her heart. She wept a few hot tears by herself which nobody even knew of or suspected, and then she returned to the children's lessons and her daily business, her head swimming a little, and with a weakness born of past agitation, but subdued into a composure not feigned but real. For after all, everything can be remedied

except exposure, she thought to herself; and going to Miss Margetts' showed at least a glimmering of common sense on the part of the runaway, and saved all public discussion of the "difficulty" between Rose and her mother. Mrs. Damerel was a clergyman's wife—nay, one might say a clergywoman in her own person, accustomed to all the special decorums and exactitudes which those who take the duties of the caste to heart consider incumbent upon that section of humanity; but she set about inventing a series of fibs on the spot with an ease which I fear long practice and custom had given. How many fibs had she been compelled to tell on her husband's behalf?—exquisite little romances about his health and his close study, and the mental occupations which kept him from little necessary duties; although she knew perfectly well that his study was mere desultory reading, and his delicate health self-indulgence. She had shielded him so with that delicate network of falsehood that the Rector had gone out of the world with the highest reputation. *She* had all her life been subject to remark as rather a commonplace wife for such a man, but no one had dreamt of criticising him. Now she had the same thing to begin over again; and she carried her system to such perfection that she began upon her own family, as indeed in her husband's case she had always done, imbuing the children with a belief in his abstruse studies and sensitive organization, as well as the outer world.

"Rose has gone to visit Miss Margetts a visit," she said, at the early dinner. "I think a little change will do her good. I shall run up to town in a few days and see after her things."

"Gone to Miss Margetts'! I wonder why no one ever said so," cried Agatha, who was always full of curiosity. "What a funny thing to go off on a visit without even saying a word!"

"It was settled quite suddenly," said the mother, with perfect composure. "I don't think she has been looking well for some days; and I always intended to go to town about her things."

"What a very funny thing," repeated Agatha, "to go off at five o'clock; never to say a word to anyone—not even to take a box with her clothes, only that little black bag. I never heard of anything so funny; and to be so excited about it that she never went to bed."

"Do not talk nonsense," said Mrs. Damerel, sharply; "it was not decided till the evening before, after you were all asleep."

"But, mamma——"

"I think you might take some of this pudding down to poor Mary Simpson," said Mrs. Damerel, calmly—"she has no appetite, poor girl; and, Agatha, you can call at the post-office, and ask Mrs. Brown if her niece has got a place yet—I think she might suit me as housemaid, if she has not got a place."

"Then, thank heaven," said Agatha, diverted entirely into a new channel, "we shall get rid of Mary Jane!"

Having thus, as it were, made her experiment upon the subject

nearest her heart, Mrs. Damerel had her little romance perfectly ready for Mr. Incedon when he came. "You must not blame me for a little disappointment to-day," she said, "though indeed I ought to have sent you word had I not been so busy. You must have seen that Rose was not herself yesterday. She has her father's fine organization, poor child, and all our troubles have told upon her. I have sent her to her old school, to Miss Margetts, whose care I can rely upon, for a little change. It will be handy in many ways, for I must go to town for shopping, and it will be less fatiguing to Rose to meet me there than to go up and down on the same day."

"Then she was not well yesterday?" said Mr. Incedon, over whose face various changes had passed of disappointment, annoyance, and relief.

"Could you not see that?" said the mother, smiling with gentle reproof. "When did Rose show temper before? She has her faults, but that is not one of them; but she has her father's fine organization. I don't hesitate to say now, when it is all over, that poverty brought us many annoyances and some privations, as it does to everybody, I suppose. Rose has borne up bravely, but of course she felt them; and it is a speciality with such highly-strung natures," said this elaborate deceiver, "that they never break down till the pressure is removed."

"Ah! I ought to have known it," said Mr. Incedon; "and, indeed," he added, after a pause, "what you say is a great relief, for I had begun to fear that so young a creature might have found out that she had been too hasty—that she did not know her own mind."

"It is not her mind, but her nerves and temperament," said the mother. "I shall leave her quite quiet for a few days."

"And must I leave her quiet too?"

"I think so, if you don't mind. I could not tell you at the time," said Mrs. Damerel, with absolute truth and candour such as give the best possible effect when used as accompaniments to the pious fib, "for I knew you would have wished to help us, and I could not have allowed it; but there have been a great many things to put up with. You don't know what it is to be left to the tender mercies of a maid-of-all-work, and Rose has had to soil her poor little fingers, as I never thought to see a child of mine do; it is no disgrace, especially when it is all over," she added, with a little laugh.

"Disgrace! it is nothing but honour," said the lover, with some moisture starting into his eyes. He would have liked to kiss the poor little fingers of which her mother spoke with playful tenderness, and went away comparatively happy, wondering whether there was not something more to do than he had originally thought of by which he could show his pride and delight and loving homage to his Rose.

Poor Mrs. Damerel! I am afraid it was very wicked of her, as a clergywoman who ought to show a good example to the world in

general; and she could have whipped Rose all the same for thus leaving her in the lurch; but still it was clever, and a gift which most women have to exercise, more or less.

But oh! the terrors that overwhelmed her soul when, after having dismissed Mr. Incedon, thus wrapped over again in a false security, she bethought herself that Rose had travelled to town in company with young Wodehouse; that they had been shut up for more than an hour together; that he had told his love-tale, and she had confided enough to him to leave him not hopeless at least. Other things might be made to arrange themselves; but what was to be done with the always rebellious girl when the man she preferred—a young lover, impassioned and urgent—had come into the field?

